

PERCEIVED FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN VISION IMPAIRED GOLF

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Introduction

Participation in sport by persons with a vision impairment has numerous benefits for health and wellbeing. The aim of this study was to identify the facilitators and barriers for participation in golf for individuals with vision impairment (VI).

Methods

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 VI golfers, 10 guides, and 5 novices during the British VI Golf Open tournament in Northern Ireland in August 2021 (see figure 1). Content analysis of the interview data identified the benefits, facilitators, challenges playing VI golf, the role of guides, and future developments of the sport. Ethical approval was granted by the Vision and Hearing Sciences Departmental Research Ethics Panel at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, UK (FSE/FREP/20/988). The study adhered to the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Results and Discussion

Content analysis of the interview data identified the benefits, facilitators, challenges playing VI golf, the role of guides, and future developments of the sport (see figure 2). The benefits extend beyond those related to health, including personal development and a sense of purpose for players, and of reward for guides. Facilitators were largely organisational and having appropriate support and a guide. Challenges to playing and guiding were largely practical, financial, and logistical. The need to attract a more diverse range of players along with a reconsideration of the eligibility criteria were central to the perceived sustainability of VI golf.

Significance

These results highlight the practical, financial, and logistical challenges contributing to VI golf activity limitations. Due to the health, personal, and psychosocial benefits, ways of providing practical, financial and support networks to facilitate engagement in VI golf should be sought.

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Figure 1: A VI golfer and their guide preparing for a shot



Figure 2: The main categories and subcategories generated from the interviews regarding the benefits, facilitators, challenges, use of a guide, and future developments