

**TOPIC** Sport Science Behind Lines: Preparing the soldier – caring for the veteran

**TITLE** The Danish Model - Rehabilitation and personal development through sport.

**AFFILIATION** Center for Military Physical Training, Copenhagen, Denmark.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Physical activity has numerous benefits on people suffering from mental disorders<sup>1</sup>. But is this enough to ensure full rehabilitation of each individual veteran? By working alongside numerous organizations and learning from existing research on including mentally challenged people in sports<sup>2,3</sup>, the Danish Model has been developed to enhance the rehabilitation of veterans through sports, where personal development and empowerment have become the key factors in recovering from PTSD.

## **METHODS**

50 wounded veterans are chosen on the basis of a motivated application to take part in the Invictus Games program. After a screening process with psychologists from Veteran Affairs, 24 are chosen to become part of the Invictus Games program based on their commitment to the program and willingness to take self-responsibility of their rehabilitation. In collaboration with DIF Soldier Project, each veteran is supported in inclusion in local sports clubs.

## **RESULTS**

During the 2020 IG program 7 veterans have achieved their personal goals prior to the Games and left the program on this note. All have reidentified themselves and 2 have been evaluated as being fully rehabilitated after being part of the program.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The Danish Model has been proved to improve the veteran's self-esteem and the feeling of being accepted and included back into society. Veterans have to take responsibility in order for the effects to have long term benefits and the majority of the veterans will not be completely rehabilitated after the Invictus Games program. Therefore it is of great importance to ensure that the veteran does not experience a relapse in the rehabilitation but continues to work with personal development and empowerment.

## **PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR CISM**

Sport itself is part of the answer in the rehabilitation of veterans suffering from PTSD. To ensure rehabilitation of the veteran through sports, personal development and empowerment should be the key factors when seeking long term effects in a short term rehabilitation program.

## **REFERENCES**

1. Rosenbaum et al. Physical activity in the treatment of Post-traumatic stress disorder: A systematic review and meta-analysis
2. Fehsenfeld: Inclusion of Outsiders Through Sports
3. Ley et. al "In the Sport I Am Here": Therapeutic Processes and Health Effects of Sport and Exercise on PTSD

**PRESENTATION TYPE** Oral

## **AUTHORS**

Private Sara Almholt Hjalager