

The Guardian, Tuesday, 13th May 2014 'Swimmers with dyspraxia fall foul of Paralympics bureaucracy'

The Dyspraxia Foundation is appalled to learn that people with dyspraxia will be excluded from participating in the Paralympic Games and calls on the International Paralympic Committee to reconsider their decision to remove category S17.

Dyspraxia, a serious disorder that affects motor coordination, perception, language and thought is formally recognised by international organisations including the World Health Organisation (WHO 2003) where it is listed as a specific developmental disorder of motor function. People with dyspraxia, a form of developmental coordination disorder, experience coordination and organisational difficulties which mean that they have to work much harder than others to develop the skills necessary for even very basic motor tasks, such as carrying a drink without spilling it. The considerable effort required to master more complex physical activities such as swimming deters many people with dyspraxia from participating in sports, putting them at risk of poor physical health and fitness. People living with dyspraxia frequently experience discrimination at school and in the workplace because their difficulties are not recognised or understood. Removing the S17 category adds to their disadvantage by failing to acknowledge the often considerable impact of this hidden disability on their performance in sports and by inappropriately and unfairly judging their physical performance against 'able-bodied' standards. Swimming is a physical activity which has many health and social benefits for people with dyspraxia and the Dyspraxia Foundation is extremely disappointed that the decision by the IPC will exclude its members from swimming competitively at a time when there is a national focus on inclusion in sports for people of all abilities. We therefore call on the IPC to reconsider its decision.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/may/13/swimmers-dyspraxia-fall-foul-paralympics-bureaucracy>