

Medical and Scientific Controversies in Paralympic Sport

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As the Paralympic Movement continues to grow rapidly, issues related to sports medicine and science remain paramount to ensuring fair play and safe sport for all athletes. Although the majority of considerations for Paralympic athletes are similar to their able-bodied counterparts, several controversies regarding unique aspects of disability sport have come to the fore. Some of these include: 1)"boosting," or the intentional induction of autonomic dysreflexia for performance enhancement, 2) leg length determination in amputee runners, 3)the potential performance-enhancing qualities of therapeutic botox, and 4)anti-doping and medication use specific to Paralympic athletes. This talk will explore these unique controversies, thus providing examples of how Paralympic sport might be better regulated into the future. The speaker will then discuss the role of medical professionals, sports administrators, and educators on working together to enhance opportunities for athletes.