

A SOCIOCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF ADAPTIVE SKATEBOARDING

Nikolaus Dean
University of British Columbia

WHAT WE DID

- This study explored physically disabled skateboarders and wheelchair motocross riders' experiences with the skateboarding community, both online (on Instagram) and in different skatepark settings.
- To explore their experiences, I interviewed 30 physically disabled riders. During the interviews, I asked the riders to share and discuss posts on their Instagram accounts. I analyzed the data to identify themes.

WHAT WE FOUND

- Participants reported positive experiences with the skateboarding community, and identified several benefits:
 - Increased physical and mental health
 - Enhanced self-confidence and independence
 - Expanded social networks and greater sense of belonging
- Despite this potential, disabled women received less recognition and support compared to men and cost of participation was a barrier for all participants.
- Participants used Instagram for connection, education, and awareness about disability and adaptive sports.
- They noted the importance of including disabled people in the design and planning process of new skateparks to ensure that skateparks are welcoming and accessible to all.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Skatepark planners have a responsibility to make their designs as **accessible** and **inclusive** as possible to different users, including people with disabilities. People with disabilities should be included in the **design** and **planning** of new skateparks.
- **Skatepark accessibility can be improved by:**
 - Making small spatial modifications, such as colour contrast between different sections of the space.
 - Ensuring that there are accessible pathways to and from skateparks, and accessible washrooms and rest areas nearby.
- **Instagram** can be used as a resource and a space for **connection** among disabled riders. The platform also presents skateparks and sport organizations with an opportunity to promote **education** and **awareness** about adaptive skateboarding.

