Amended Abstract for DCD UK 2020: Oral presentation

**What can the perceptions of motor ability and the actual motor ability of children with DCD tell us about engagement in physical activity?**

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**Background and aim:**

Children’s perceptions about their motor competence are believed to provide motivation for physical activity. A positive and reciprocal relationship between motor competence and physical activity is thought to play a role for the engagement and persistence with physical activity. Children with DCD have motor difficulties and are thought to have lower perceptions of their motor competence than typically developing children. They have also been found to participate less in physical activity and are therefore at greater risk for the negative consequences of inactivity. However, few studies enquiring about engagement in physical activity have investigated the perceived competence simultaneously with the actual motor competence of children with DCD. The aim of this study was therefore to investigate the actual and perceived motor competence of children with and without DCD over time and compare their engagement in physical activity.

**Method:**

Children aged 7-14 years (M=10.07, SD= 1.66, 85.3% boys) n=34 were recruited from mainstream schools via special needs coordinators. DSM5 criteria were used to identify children with and without DCD; all were also screened for ADHD and ASD. The children were followed over 2 years. Their motor competence was repeatedly assessed using the MABC2 and their perception of motor ability was simultaneously assessed using the CSAPPA.

**Results:**

The findings contrast with previous theoretical perspective, as no significant difference in perception was found between the children with DCD, including those with co-occurring ADHD or ASD, and the children with typical motor development assessed over the same time period. Meaning is discussed in relation to the model of Stodden et al. (2008) of physical activity and motor competence.

**Conclusion:**

The results suggest that a more complex explanation involving developmental maturity and other factors play a role in the children’s perception of their motor ability. This study differs from others as ecological factors were also examined. These have implications for intervention to improve the participation in physical activity for children with DCD and indicate directions for future study.