

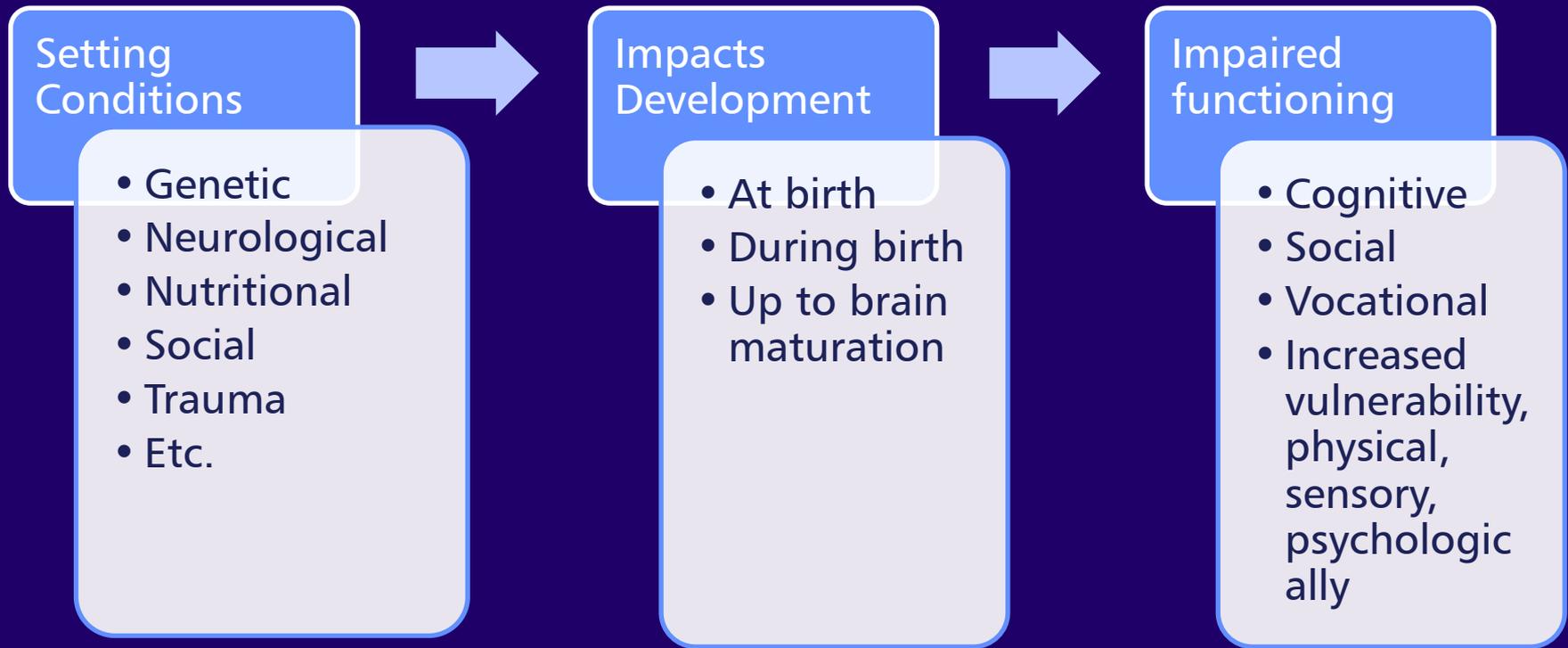
International Symposium of Sports for Persons with Disabilities

**Lien I-Nan Foundation for Promotion of Education and Research in
Rehabilitation Medicine
April 21-22, 2012 Taipei**

Prof Jan Burns

**The impact of involvement in sport on psychological
factors such as self-esteem and social networks for
people with intellectual disabilities**

Intellectual Disability



Potential life experience for people with ID

Poor physical health

- Obesity/under weight
- Untreated sensory deficits
- Untreated physical illnesses e.g. diabetes
- Very low fitness
- Low health literacy
- Etc.

Poor psychological health

Economically poor

Potential life experience for people with ID

Poor physical health

Poor psychological health

- High levels anxiety
- High levels depression
- High levels serious mental health problems
- Increased likelihood dementia

Economically poor

Potential life experience for people with ID

Poor physical health

Poor psychological health

Economically poor

- Very low income
- High unemployment
- Socially isolated
- Few skills
- Poor housing etc.

What we know about the impact of sport is....

Physical

- Fitness
- Disease resilience

Social

- Social networks
- Increased activity

Affective

- Alleviates anxiety & depression
- Increases self-esteem etc.

Cognitive

- Increased attention
- Increased learning

Given we know that people with ID are vulnerable to all sorts of problems that research has shown can be alleviated by sports participation..... what does research tell us about the involvement of people with ID in sports?

Not a lot

A summary of the research

Area	Example papers
Attitudes to ID	Townsend & Hassall (2007); Freudenthal, Boyd & Tivis (2001)
Intervention – behavioural psychosocial	Jones, Walley, Leech, Paterson, Common, & Metcalf (2007); Ninot & Maiäno (2007); Weiss, Diamond, Demark & Lovald (2003)
Intervention – physical health	Moss S. (2009); Marks, Sisirak, Heller, & Wagner (2010)
Health screening	McCracken, Lumm & Laoide-Kemp (2011)
Family	Weiss & Diamond (2005)
Participation	Robertson & Emerson (2010); Gillespie (2008)
Methodology	Peterson, Peterson, Lowe & Nothwehr (2009)
Reviews	Hutzler & Korsensky (2010); Bartlo & Klein (2011)

The state of knowledge – Physical (11 studies)

- Moderate to strong evidence that physical activity positively affected balance, muscle strength, and quality of life in individuals with intellectual disability.
- Research in this area needs to be translated into practice, specifically development of physical activity programs that are adaptable to the needs of individuals with intellectual disability.

Bartlo & Klein (2011), Physical Activity Benefits and Needs in Adults With Intellectual Disabilities: Systematic Review of the Literature, AJIDD.

The state of knowledge – Motivations (23 studies)

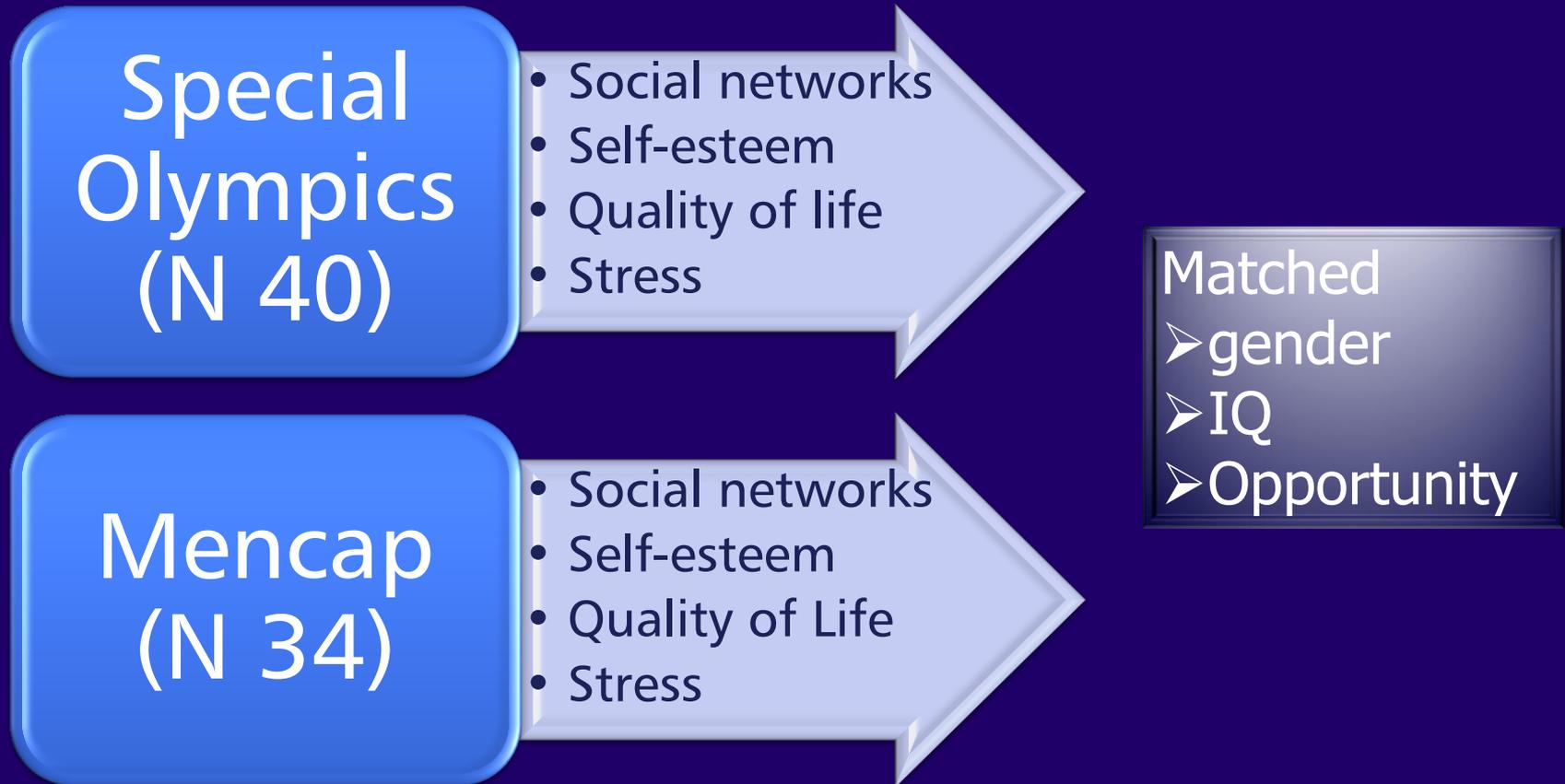
- Both exercise and sport-related activities seem to contribute to well-being;
- Increased perceptions of self efficacy and social competence;
- Improved physical fitness and elevated skill level gained during exercise and sport activities appear to serve as mediators.

Example of a research study carried out in the UK

Dr Clare Watts & Prof Jan Burns



Psychosocial impact of involvement in Special Olympics UK.



Quantitative Findings

- Self-esteem was higher in the Special Olympics (SO) group
- SO group had wider social networks
- SO group had lower stress levels
- SO group had more life opportunities
- Self-esteem was the best predictor of group membership

Qualitative Findings

- Community

'Like playing sports, meeting up with friends and coaches, tell each other stories, made some new friends. Like the coaches they make it fun'

- Self esteem, worth, confidence

'Being with the team, skiing is my life, I feel like a bond girl coming down the slopes'

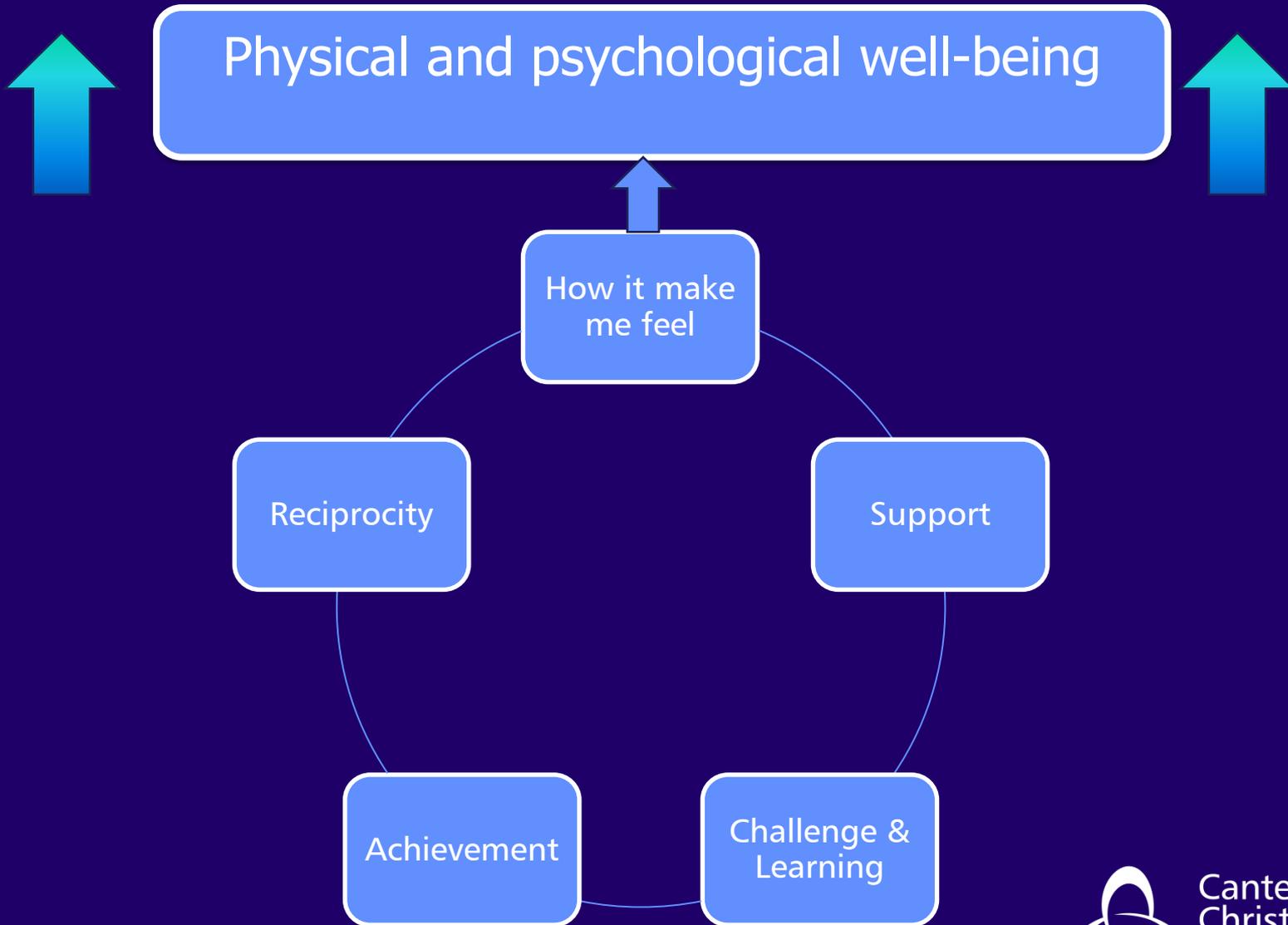
- Learning

'It keeps me fit and active. I meet new and different people. I can make decisions, go on holidays – it helps me learn new things for the future'

- Fitness

'Like working out, like getting stronger'

Implications



Future Research

- Longitudinal studies needed to strengthen evidence base
- How effective exercise regimes might be adapted
- Early intervention
- People with Autism or Asperger's Syndrome

Thank you

Any questions?