

Type 1 Diabetes and Youth Sports in Sweden: A Field Experiment on Discrimination

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Abstract

This study investigates whether children diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus (T1DM) face discrimination when seeking to join sports clubs in Sweden. Building on evidence that children with T1DM often encounter educational and economic disadvantages, we conducted a field experiment involving 193 elite-level sports clubs across football, floorball, ice hockey, and handball. Two fictitious fathers emailed each club—one referencing his son's T1DM diagnosis, the other not—requesting information about joining training activities. We then measured the likelihood of receiving a positive or complete response. The results indicate a modest gap: clubs responded positively in 77% of cases for the control (non-disabled) child and 66% for the child with T1DM, a difference that was not statistically significant. Similarly, the likelihood of receiving detailed training information did not differ significantly between the two groups. These findings suggest no clear evidence of discrimination at the initial point of contact, highlighting a level of inclusivity within Swedish sports clubs. Nevertheless, limitations remain, particularly concerning real-world interactions and generalizability beyond higher-tier clubs. Reporting null results is essential to broadening our understanding of discrimination dynamics.

Keywords: Correspondence testing, Discrimination; Field experiment; Sports clubs; Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus.