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SUMMER CAMP FOR CHILDREN WITH ASD AND PARENTS PERCEPTION OF CHANGES IN PSYCHO-SOCIAL SKILLS

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The study examined in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) their psychosocial behaviors pre/post a summer sports camp of two intensive weeks in term of time (5 hours per day) and multidisciplinary approach. It's a part of larger research project, "Soccer Together", promoted by Roma Cares Foundation, non-profit organization linked to the broader context of social responsibility and sustainability of AS Roma, Italian professional soccer club playing in Serie A and the sport organization Academia di Calcio Integrato. "Soccer Together" pursues the goal to develop with the children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities their wellbeing, better social interactions with peers/adults and a playful sport involvement through a team sport, like soccer so popular and loved all over the world by young people. Participants were 29 children (8-13 years) from mild to severe degrees of ASD. They alternated three activities each day for a time of 75 minutes: Soccer, aquatic activities and expressive activities. The team leading the camp consisted in coaches, sport psychologists, one speech-language therapist and one physician. The Adaptive Social Skills Measure (Walker et al. 2010) has been used to assess the children psychosocial skills in four areas: verbal communication, social interaction, transitions and attention to task. The parents filled the questionnaire pre/post the camp assessing the psychosocial competences of their children. Results showed the parents perceived significant improvement in children for all four subscales. The data outlined the relevance to study in a naturalistic context these psychosocial skills in a short period of training but intensive for number of hours per day and activities practiced.

BIOGRAPHY

Alberto Cei is a Psychologist and Psychotherapist, teaches Sport Psychology and Psychology Applied to Football at the University of San Raffaele, Motor Science Department, Italy and Psychology at the School of Sport of the Italian Olympic Committee. He attended at the last six Olympic games working with athlete winners of 12 Olympic medals. He wrote 15 books in sport psychology and performance development. He is the Editorial Manager of *International Journal of Sport Psychology* and former FEPSAC treasurer.

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