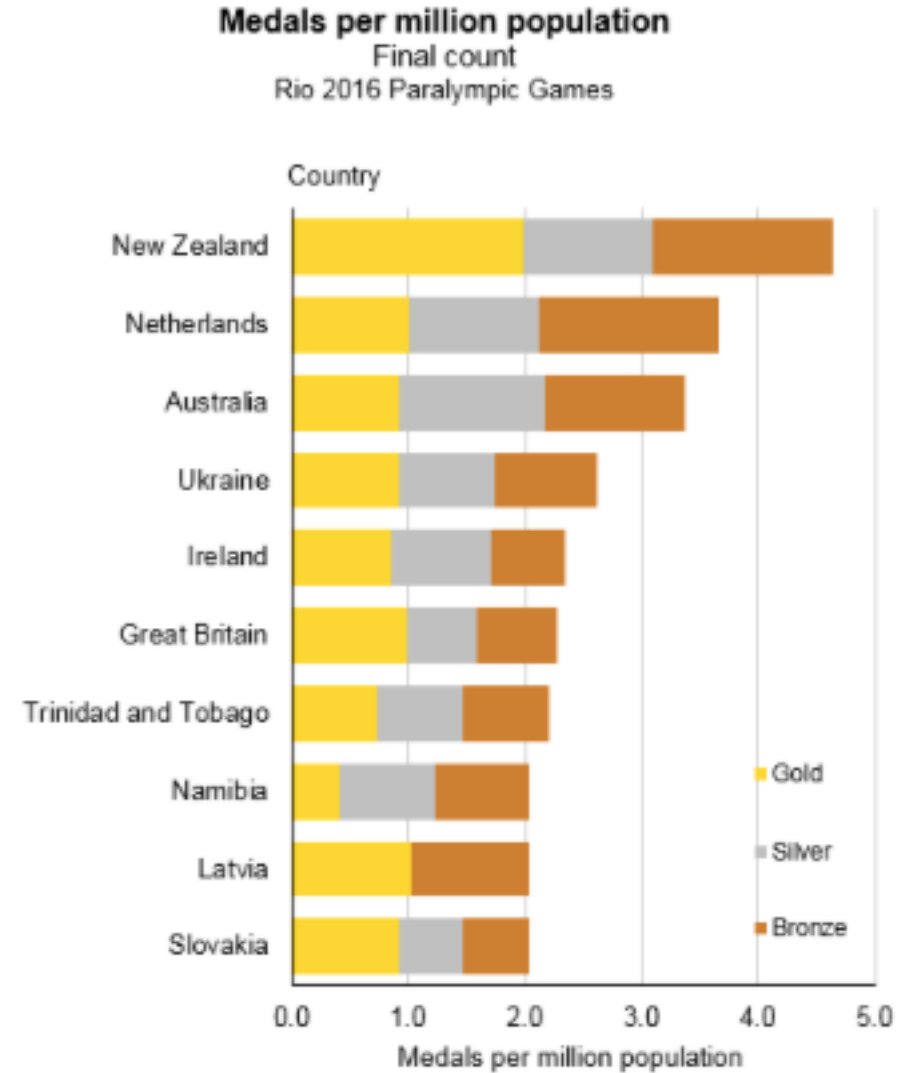


Pathways to the Paralympic Games: Exploring the sporting journeys of high performance Para athletes with a limb deficiency



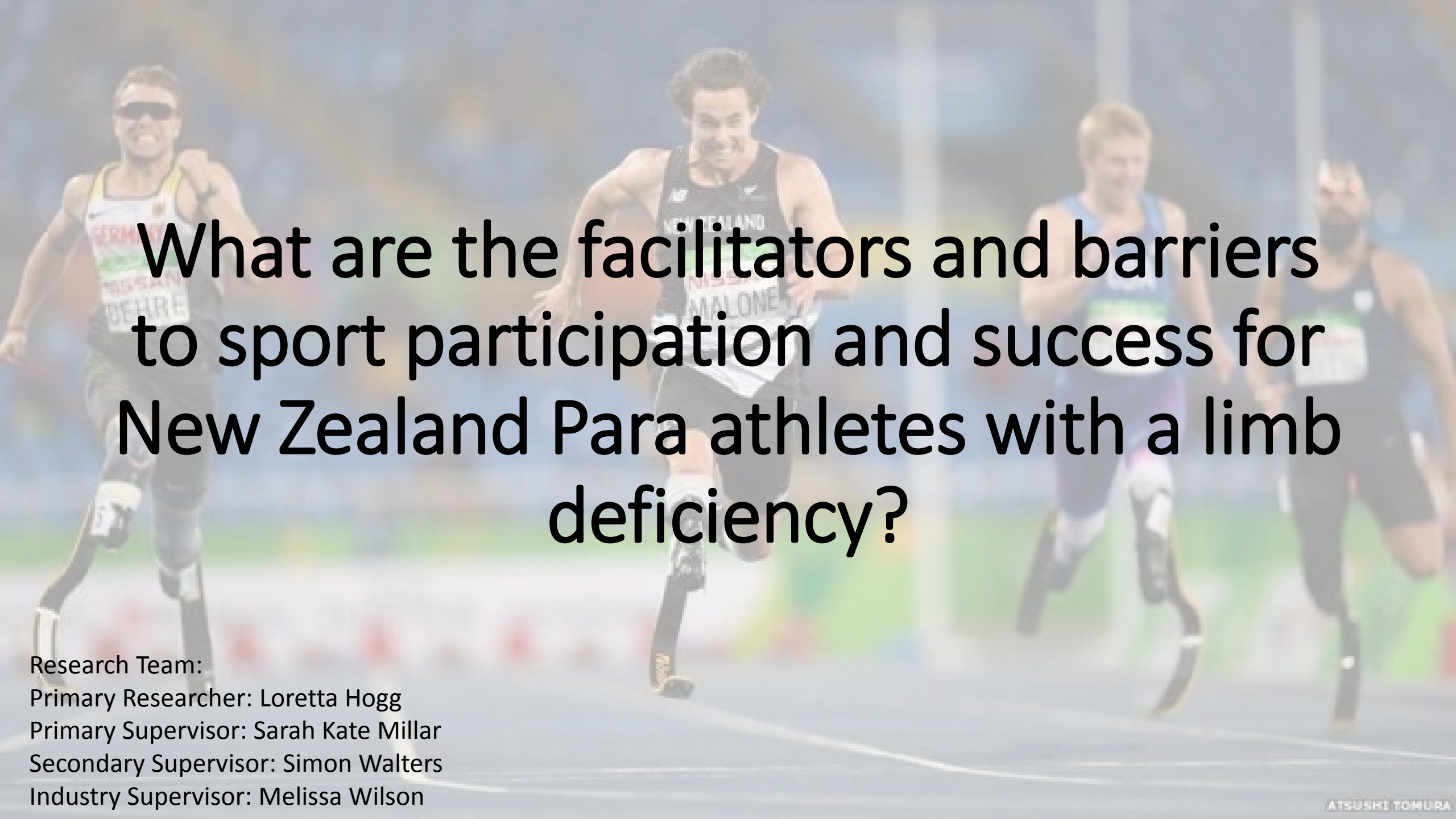
- 31 Para athletes
- 6 Sports
- 68 events contested
- 57 Finals
- 98% of NZ team finished in top 8
- 21 Medals
- 9 Gold Medals
- 11 Paralympic Records
- 3 World Records
- 13th on medal table overall
- 1st in world for medals per capita



Updated 7:00am NZST Monday 19 Sep 2016.

Note: Population estimates are 2015 estimates from the United Nations.

Source: Statistics New Zealand, with medal counts from www.rio2016.com

A background image showing four para-athletes with prosthetic limbs running on a track. The athlete in the center is wearing a black singlet with 'NEW ZEALAND' and 'MALONE' visible. To his left, another athlete wears a singlet with 'GERMANY', 'TASSAN', and 'BEHRE'. The other two athletes are in blue and black singlets. The text is overlaid on this image.

What are the facilitators and barriers to sport participation and success for New Zealand Para athletes with a limb deficiency?

Research Team:

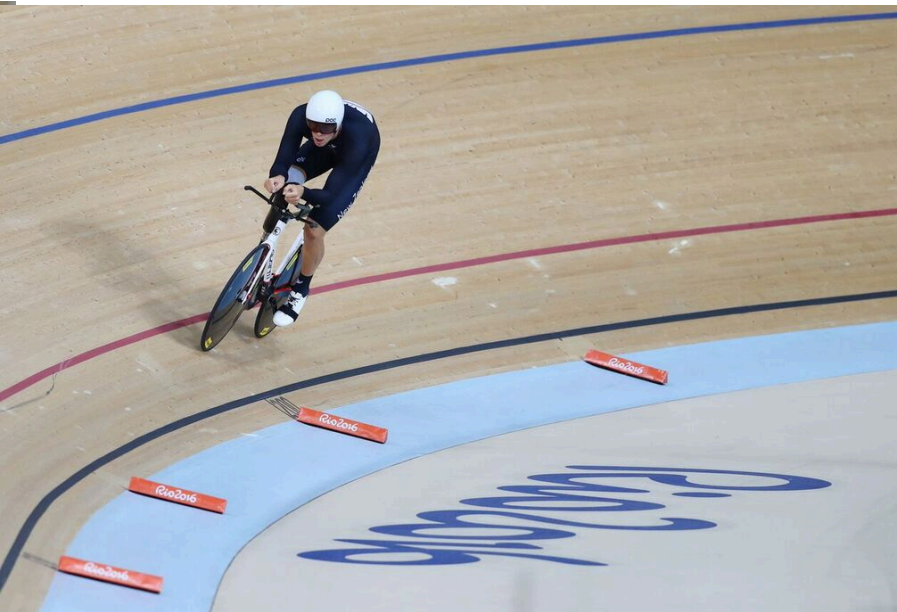
Primary Researcher: Loretta Hogg

Primary Supervisor: Sarah Kate Millar

Secondary Supervisor: Simon Walters

Industry Supervisor: Melissa Wilson

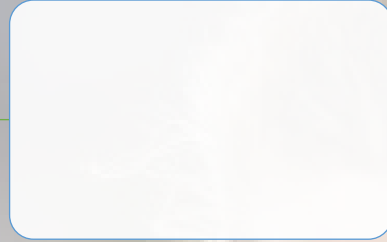
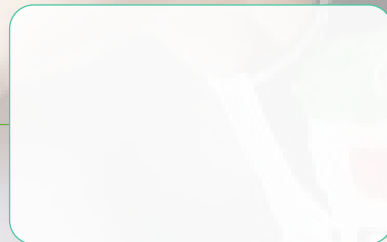
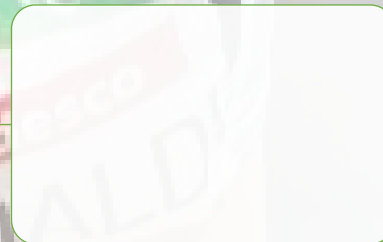
Participants



How I thought the results would look

Barriers

Facilitators

An empty white rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for a response to the 'Barriers' header.An empty white rectangular box with a thin green border, intended for a response to the 'Facilitators' header.An empty white rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for a response to the 'Barriers' header.An empty white rectangular box with a thin green border, intended for a response to the 'Facilitators' header.An empty white rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for a response to the 'Barriers' header.An empty white rectangular box with a thin green border, intended for a response to the 'Facilitators' header.

Preliminary Results: Themes

Barriers and Facilitators

```
graph TD; A[Barriers and Facilitators] --> B[The Training Environment]; A --> C[Impairment]; A --> D[Prosthetic Technology]; A --> E[Money];
```

The Training
Environment

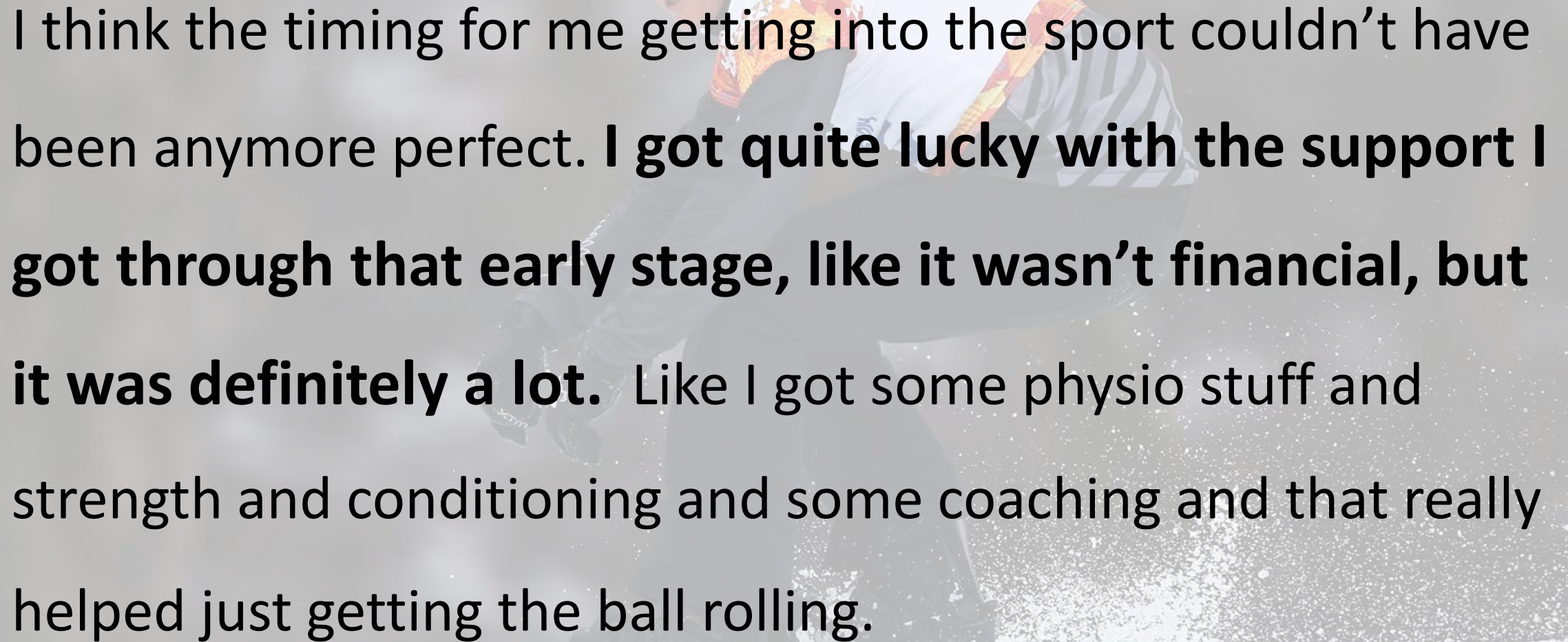
Impairment

Prosthetic
Technology

Money

Facilitators: The Training Environment

I think the timing for me getting into the sport couldn't have been anymore perfect. **I got quite lucky with the support I got through that early stage, like it wasn't financial, but it was definitely a lot.** Like I got some physio stuff and strength and conditioning and some coaching and that really helped just getting the ball rolling.



Barriers: The Training Environment

I didn't even know what the world record was until I broke it. Then all of a sudden all of this support was just thrown at you... and I did not know what to do with it. It was overwhelming! And I was just like, **“well where were you like 12 months ago when I needed you?”** This is what you need as a development athlete, not as an already cracked it.

Barriers: Impairment

As a five year old I was involved in athletics. One day I was in this race and I was coming last, as I always did, and the guy on the loud speaker said, “now all put your hands together, here she comes and she’s only got one leg.” That was the last time I ran. I was like,

“how dare you point out that I am different than the other kids? I came last because I’m not fast enough nothing to do with anything else!”

Facilitators: Impairment

Leading into my first Paralympics training camp I felt I'm too good for this, I'm an able bodied person, I just happen to be an amputee. The weekend was life changing. I realised I was looking at these athletes with admiration, with respect, and I was like, "shit I've spent my whole god damn life hiding this." That weekend I came home and I'm like, **"this is my tribe man, these are my people,"** I'm blown away by these people.

Facilitators: Prosthetic Technology

A background image of a Paralympian cyclist wearing a white helmet and a black and white jersey, riding a track bike. The cyclist is in a dynamic, forward-leaning position, typical of track cycling. The background is a blurred, light-colored surface, possibly a track or a studio floor.

With cycling, I just used my normal leg. There was a Paralympian at the time for New Zealand, he sent old parts from his cycle leg and we set it up in the garage, it was a socket with a seat post and a cleat on the bottom.

So you noticed the difference straight away?

Straight away! Straight away you're not losing the power, straight away you are feeling connected to the pedal, you can climb hills!

Barriers: Prosthetic Technology



A private company approached me with a prototype foot for snowboarding. It was really good for quite a few seasons.

Obviously there was changes along the way because it was a prototype, but then it got to the point where **they ran out of funding** and I was left with this high tech foot that no one else was progressing.

Facilitators: Money



My experience would be very different if my parents couldn't afford to send me to these (international competitions)...

I probably would have been still just trying to get to the top.

Barriers: Money



I went to World Champs in 2011 but leg technology had improved and there was so much emphasis on the leg and the frustration I was feeling, **‘well if I had a better leg I would do better,’** and I got a quote, and it was going to be \$47,000 for a new leg, and I felt that more of our sport was coming down to limbs.

Conclusion

What are the facilitators and barriers to sport participation and success for New Zealand Para athletes with a limb deficiency?

- **Key themes were: The Training Environment, Impairment, Prosthetic Technology and Money.**
- **Themes are both barriers and facilitators, it is the perception of the Paralympian that determines the outcome.**



The Next Step

Questions?



Interview guide

- Tell me about you:
- Tell me about your family
- Tell me about your places of residence
- Tell me about your schooling and work.
- Tell me about your condition
- Tell me about your involvement in sport:
- What sports have you played?
- At what ages did you progress through the levels of competition for your various sports (club/ regional/ national/ international)? (Chart 2)
- At what ages did you progress through development or high performance programs (development squads/ NSO's/ HPSNZ carding/ PNZ)?
- Tell me about your experiences in each of these sports (STOP WRITING, listen and note probes from what they say)
- Experiences on entry (why change/stay/ get selected etc..., how....Who or what, how did you get around/ over, probes)
- Experiences through involvement
- Experiences of exit
- Tell me about your career as a whole: (reflection as someone with a disability)
- Were there any points in your development that you found particularly difficult?
- How did you overcome these challenges?
- Did you face any different challenges and facilitators when you were in development and striving to get to the top compared to trying to remain at the top?
- What factors distinguished you from those who did not get involved or sustain regular involvement in Para sport?
- What factors distinguished you from other Para athletes that did not transition to Paralympic level?
- (wrap up) Who/what was critical to your success as a Para athlete?
-
- Anything else you think is important for us to understand for us to provide better experiences for more Para athletes as we work towards improving Para sport in NZ?