



## PAPER COMPETITIONS

# Insights from the Paralympic Experience on COVID-19 Infection Control Measures for People with Disabilities

\*Yudai Kaneda<sup>1</sup>, Van Tai Nguyen<sup>2</sup>, Suzue Harã<sup>3</sup>, Ami Kató<sup>4</sup>, Yuma Nishimurã<sup>5</sup>, Wakana Matsumura<sup>6</sup>, Hatsune Kido<sup>7</sup>, Rin Gotoh<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hokkaido University,  
Hokkaido, Japan

<sup>2</sup>International University of  
Health and Welfare, Chiba,  
Japan

<sup>3</sup>National Defense Medical  
College, Saitama, Japan

<sup>4</sup>Oita University, Oita, Japan

<sup>5</sup>Osaka University, Osaka,  
Japan

<sup>6</sup>Kanagawa Dental  
University, Kanagawa, Japan

<sup>7</sup>Kumamoto University,  
Kumamoto, Japan

<sup>8</sup>Tsukuba University, Ibaraki,  
Japan

10.52629/jamsa.vi

### Address for Correspondence:

Yudai Kaneda  
Hokkaido University, Hokkaido,  
Japan

nature271828@gmail.com

## Introduction

At the Tokyo Olympic Games, a measure called “bubble scheme” was taken for infection control, which focused on daily antigen testing, isolation, and avoidance of contact with the general public. At the Olympics, this infection control was considered to be effective, and the Paralympics followed the same approach.

## Objective

In this study, we evaluated the effectiveness of the “bubble scheme” in COVID-19 control among the Paralympic Athletes. Based on the result, we discussed the importance of further support for people with disabilities.

## Methods

We searched the the website of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation NHK and Tokyo Metropolitan Government and identified the number of infected athletes in Tokyo during the period from August 17 to September 5 and from July 13 to August 8, when the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic and Olympic Games athletes' village was opening. We analyzed the collected data descriptively.

## Results

The infection rates in Tokyo during the Paralympic and Olympic Games were 0.54% and 0.48%, respectively, while the infection rates among athletes were 0.30% and 0.25%, respectively. In both cases, the infection rates among athletes were lower than those

in Tokyo. The infection rate among athletes was about 1.2 times higher in the Paralympics than in the Olympics.

### **Conclusion**

Our research revealed that the “bubble scheme” was effective to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among the athletes, suggesting that the same method should be adopted in future mass gathering events. However, the measure could not completely prevent infection, and the infection rate was higher among the Paralympic athletes compared to the Olympic athletes, suggesting the need for more bespoke measures toward people with disabilities such as improving ventilation, providing free at-home covid test kits, enhancing remote support from healthcare workers.

### **Keywords**

*Paralympic, COVID-19, people with disabilities, bubble scheme, Japan*