

## ON-3

### **It's like balancing on a slackline - A description from adults living with congenital heart disease**

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#### Introduction:

Several studies have shown that adults with congenital heart disease have reduced exercise capacity and do not reach the recommended daily level of physical activity. With this in view, it is of great importance to investigate how this population experiences physical activity. The aim of the study is to illuminate how adults with congenital heart disease describes themselves in relation to physical activity.

#### Methods:

Semi-structured interviews with fourteen adults with complex congenital heart disease were performed. Patients were recruited from the clinic waiting list, based on their scheduled follow up and diagnosis. Interviews were analysed by qualitative content analysis.

#### Results:

The overall theme It's like balancing on a slackline illustrates how adults with congenital heart disease described themselves in relation to physical activity. The overall theme consists of four themes: Being an adventurer- enjoying the challenges of physical activity, Being a realist- adapting to physical ability, Being a non-doer- lacking prerequisites for physical activity and Being an outsider- feeling excluded depending on physical ability.

#### Conclusions:

The descriptions on themselves as a physically active were not constant or one-dimensional and the descriptions varied during the interviews, related to different time periods in life. It meant that they could describe themselves as being an adventurer liking tough challenges, but at the same time describing themselves as being a non-doer with uncertainty over their physical strength. The findings point out specific factors for adults with CHD that might constitute as obstacles, but also possibilities for being physically active.