Holidays and Sports for Haemophiliacs in Italy

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The Italian Summer Holidays Centre for Haemophiliacs and their families was instituted in 1973 by the Haemophilia Centre of Pisa in collaboration with the Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano in the pleasant surroundings of the Pisan beach. The aim of these special camp is to inform haemophiliacs and their families, who come from all over Italy, of the most up-to-date prevention, treatment and rehabilitation devices, and to instruct them on their performance by themselves. The Pisan Centre was the first in Italy to initiate haemophiliacs into a way of life based on physical activity, since strong muscles protect limbs from future haemorrhages. In order to reduce or eliminate some bleeding episodes and thus achieve a behaviour as near as possible normal, hundreds of haemophiliacs have been urged to attain and maintain limbs in the best physical condition through physiotherapy, home exercises and sports, such as athletics (race, jump, discus and javelin throwing) and swimming, without prophylactic treatment. Therefore, athletics became a routine activity of haemophiliacs both in their spare time and during their classes of physical education. They have become aware of the safety and the usefulness of this practice, and of their capabilities of motion. Thus haemophiliacs, while on holiday at the seaside, learn to manage their own body, collaborating in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programmes in order to actively defend their physical, psychological and productive integrity and to lead an independent life.