

A POSITIVE TURNING POINT IN LIFE

Experiences of a comprehensive interdisciplinary rehabilitation programme in persons with post-polio syndrome

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Introduction

There is an overall understanding that persons with post-polio syndrome (PPS) can benefit from being admitted to a team specialised in PPS and go through an individualized rehabilitation programme, but there is no study that has evaluated or explored the effects of such programmes.

Aims

To describe and enhance our understanding of how persons with PPS experience the influence of an individualized, goal-oriented, comprehensive rehabilitation programme.

Methods and material

Twelve persons (40 to 73 years of age) with clinically verified PPS who had taken part in an individualized, goal-oriented, comprehensive interdisciplinary rehabilitation programme were interviewed 9 to 18 months after discharge. The qualitative research interviews were analysed with the constant comparative method of Grounded theory.

Results

The rehabilitation programme was experienced as a turning-point in the participant's life.



Before rehabilitation they felt being in a downward slope without control. Rehabilitation was the start of a process of change whereby they acquired new skills which, over time, contributed to a different but good life. After about a year, they had a sense of control and had accepted life with late effects of polio. They had also established new habits, taken on a changed valued self and could look at their future with confidence.

Conclusions

Persons with PPS can benefit from a rehabilitation programme and experience positive changes in their management of daily activities and in their view of their PPS, their future and their self. The results also indicate that the effects of such a programme goes beyond that of reducing impairments.