

# SELF-PERCEIVED IMPAIRMENTS IN PERSONS WITH POST-POLIO SYNDROME

Jan Lexell MD, PhD, Ulla-Britt Flansbjerg PT, PhD and Christina Brogårdh PT, PhD  
Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, Skåne University Hospital, Lund  
and Department of Health Sciences, Lund University, Sweden

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## Introduction

Studies of post-polio syndrome (PPS) have assessed whether or not the persons experience a particular impairment, but not to what degree they experience them. Therefore, we do not fully understand the association between various impairments and the person's sex and age, and factors related to the history of their acute poliomyelitis infection and the onset of PPS.

## Aims

To assess the degree of self-perceived impairments related to PPS and to determine the association with sex, age, age at and the reported severity of the acute poliomyelitis infection, and the duration of perceived stable functioning and any new impairment.

## Methods and material

One hundred and ninety three persons with prior polio and clinically verified PPS responded to a 13-item self-report questionnaire assessing the physical and psychological impairments as a result of PPS. They rated on a five-point Likert scale (from not at all to extremely) how much, over the past two weeks, they had been bothered by: muscle weakness, muscle fatigue, muscle and/or joint pain during physical activity and at rest, sensory loss, breathing difficulties at rest and during physical activity, cold intolerance, general fatigue, sleep disturbances, concentration difficulties, memory difficulties and mood swings (irritability, anxiety and feeling depressed).

## Results

Muscle fatigue, muscle weakness, general fatigue, muscle and/or joint pain during physical activity and cold intolerance were the most bothering impairments. The women perceived a significantly higher degree than the men of muscle and/or joint pain during physical activity and at rest, general fatigue and sleep disturbances. The degree of the most bothering impairments was significantly associated with the duration of perceived stable functioning and the duration of any new impairment.

## Conclusions

Impairments typical of PPS are commonly perceived by persons with prior polio but the degree of them vary depending on the persons' sex, age, the severity of the acute infection and factors related to the onset of the new impairments.