

SELF-PERCEIVED PARTICIPATION RESTRICTIONS IN PERSONS WITH POST-POLIO SYNDROME BEFORE AND AFTER INTERDISCIPLINARY REHABILITATION

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Introduction

Rehabilitation programs for persons with post-polio syndrome (PPS) need to focus on areas of participation that are perceived as a problem and promote access to a supportive environment to enhance the participants' participation.

Aims

To assess self-perceived participation restrictions before, after and at follow-up following a comprehensive interdisciplinary rehabilitation programme for persons with PPS.

Methods and material

Sixty-six persons (mean age 64 years) with prior polio and clinically verified PPS participated in an outpatient interdisciplinary rehabilitation programme (average length 6 months). The focus of the programme was to reduce self-perceived disability by providing a variety of interventions and thereby maximize each individual's physical, mental and social potential. All individuals answered the Reintegration into Normal Living Index (RNL Index) at admission, after the programme and at follow-up (on average 6 months after rehabilitation). The RNL Index is an 11-item instrument that assesses self-perceived participation and autonomy, with a focus on reintegration into society.

Results

The average score of the RNL Index indicated that the 66 persons were moderately disabled. For the whole group, there were no significant differences after the programme and at follow-up compared with at admission. However, there was a significant correlation between the scores of the RNL Index at admission and the change between admission and discharge ($r=-0.54$; $p<0.001$), and between the scores of the RNL Index at admission and the number of interventions needed ($r= -0.29$; $p<0.05$). There was also a significant correlation ($r= -0.25$; $p<0.05$) between the number of interventions needed and the change in the RNL Index between admission and discharge.

Conclusions

Persons with PPS can experience improved participation following a comprehensive interdisciplinary rehabilitation programme. The results indicate that those with a more pronounced disability at admission and the need for many rehabilitation interventions experience the improvements and therefore seem to benefit most from a rehabilitation programme with regard to self-perceived participation restrictions.