Self-regulation as rehabilitation outcome: What is important?

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Background

Self-regulation refers to the ability to perform self-management and self-control. Whereas self-regulation is conditional for independent living, outcomes of rehabilitation with respect to self-regulation are unclear.

Aim

The aim of this study was to identify aspects of self-regulation that are fundamental according to former patients in the context of medical rehabilitation.

Methods

A qualitative approach with focus group discussions with former patients (n=40), divided over 7 main diagnostic groups: amputation (n=5), neurological diseases (n=6), chronic pain disorder (n=3), musculoskeletal disorder (n=8), spinal cord injury (n=4), acquired brain injury (n=7), and oncology (n=7).

Results

Participants emphasised self-regulation after rehabilitation is an iterative process of self-reflection. They mentioned aspects which contribute to this process. Most important aspects could be divided into three main themes.

Theme 1: To have self-insight.

Aspect 1: To have insight in their physical and cognitive impairments.

Aspect 2: To have insight in the consequences of the impairments and limitations.

Aspect 3: To have insight in their abilities.

Theme 2: To know how to cope with the consequences of the condition.

Aspect 4: To be able to communicate their limitations.

Aspect 5: To have trust in their body and functioning.

Theme 3: To apply self-regulation in their life.

Aspect 6: To make use of their abilities, and optimize functioning.

Increased ability to have self-regulation as outcome measurement for Rehabilitation.

Conclusion and clinical implications

- Participants related six aspects as important to the ability to perform self-regulation after rehabilitation.
- It helps to provide a comprehensive view of self-regulation, and can give direction to rehabilitation goals.
- It gives direction to monitor and measure self-regulation as rehabilitation outcome.