

Evaluation of personal care training of spinal cord injury patients after initial rehabilitation

Carolyn Klein¹, Madeleine Bernet², Kathrin Sommerhalder², Claudia Mischke², Sabine Hahn², Adrian Wyss¹

¹ Swiss Paraplegic Centre, Department of Nursing Development and Education; Nottwil, Switzerland

² University of Applied Sciences, Applied Research & Development in Nursing; Berne, Switzerland

Contact information: carolin.klein@paraplegie.ch

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Introduction

- In Switzerland with a national population of around 8'000'000, about 350 individuals sustain a spinal cord injury (SCI) each year.
- Patients need to learn how their "new" body works and how to take care of it. Furthermore, skills and knowledge to proactively identify, assess and overcome problems and complications associated with the disability, are needed [1].
- Patient education (PE) as a key element of SCI rehabilitation helps affected individuals to manage their new tasks in everyday life [2].
- 2009 the Swiss Paraplegic Centre developed and introduced a nurse-guided PE-program.
- The methodological and didactic concept of this program is based on the models of integrated learning [3] and cognitive apprenticeship [4].
- The aim of the study was to investigate the use of the PE-program from the perspective of the patient.

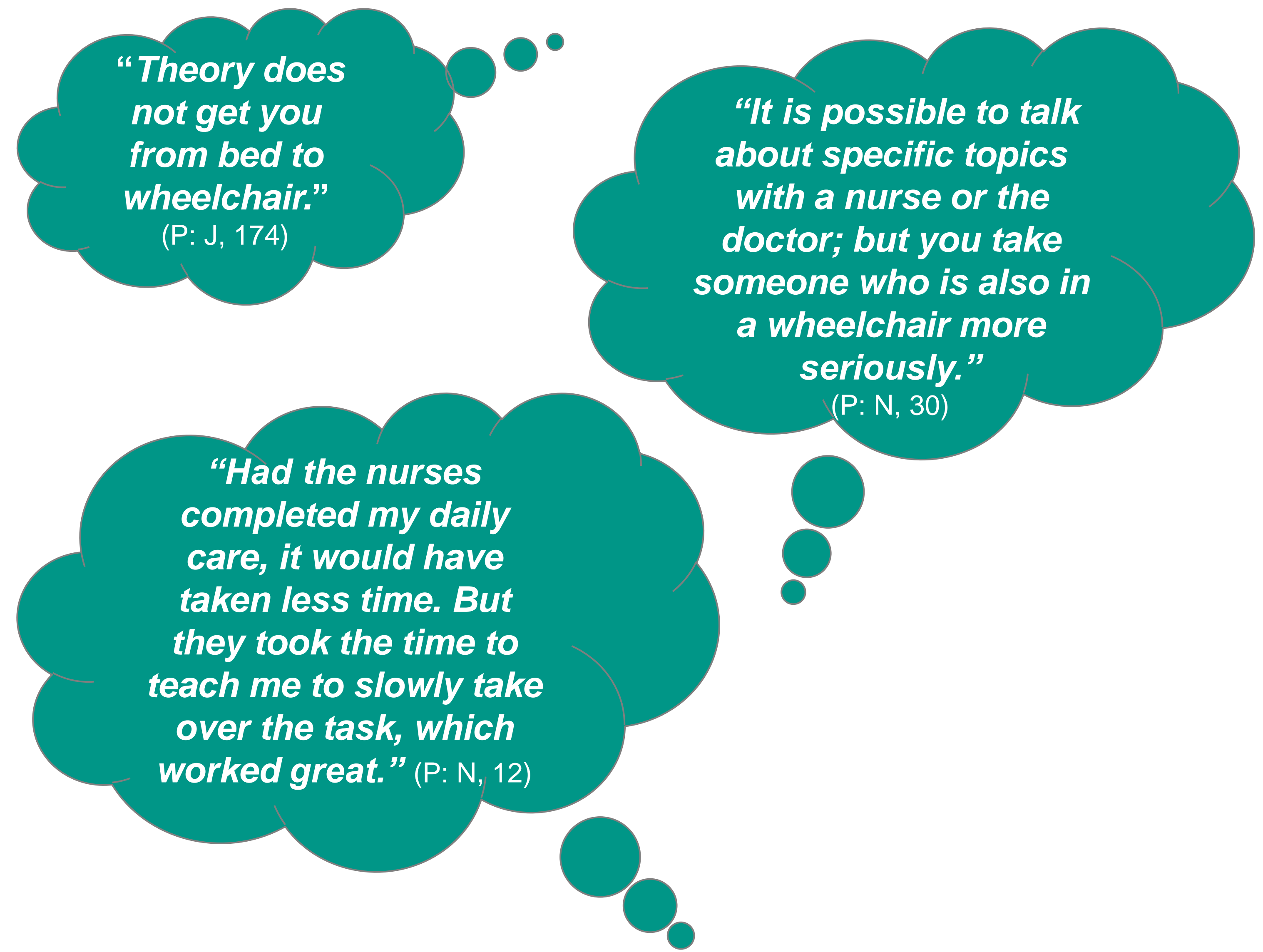
Research question

How much does PE contribute to the ability of the disabled person to manage personal care and to cope with everyday live after the initial rehabilitation?



Methods

- Ten men with SCI in initial rehabilitation, aged from 19 to 67 years (mean age: 44.2 years) were recruited.
- Each participant took part in two semi-structured qualitative interviews: shortly before discharge and six months after discharge.
- Interviews were analyzed according to the Mayring Method of Content Analysis [5].



Results [6]

- In order to develop and strengthen personal skills the practical part of personal care training was extremely relevant for the affected individuals.
- Confidence in the nursing personnel and interdisciplinary team, the attitude of the nurses concerning personal responsibility, and personalization of the entire learning and rehabilitation process stood out as crucial catalysts.
- Consultations and conversations about physical or psychological concerns with primary nurses or peers were perceived as valuable support.
- The learning process was not completed after the discharge; patients experienced the transition to home as very drastic.

Conclusion and implications

- Continuous training respecting the individuality of the person in care and continuous support by the primary nurse and trained peers are important elements of a successful PE.
- Personal care training programs should integrate facets of the individual's psychological situation and strengthen the personal responsibility.
- It is important to extend the peer support and professional information beyond the inpatient rehabilitation time.

Literature

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