

Are Stroke Survivors Participating?

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OBJECTIVE: To describe chronic stroke survivors' current level of Participation.

BACKGROUND: Current 'gold standard' stroke rehabilitation interventions focus on impairment-reduction and assume carry-over to Participation. Participation has three dimensions: social connectedness, adaptation, and active involvement in meaningful activities. Little is known about stroke survivors' level of Participation in the chronic stage.

METHOD: We analyzed existing data from 2 IRB-approved stroke rehabilitation studies. All subjects were >3 mo. post-stroke and no longer received OT. An anonymous Needs Assessment survey documented survivor-reported factors contributing to Participation. The survey was emailed to stroke survivors in an IRB-approved stroke registry. Subjects in one study completed the World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQoL-BREF), a 26-item self-report questionnaire using 4-point scale (1=low, 5=high). WHOQoL items were arranged into 3 Participation dimensions and average ratings per dimension was reported. Subjects in another study completed the Patient Specific Functional Scale (PSFS), a 5-item self-report questionnaire of the ability to accomplish self-selected meaningful activities on a 10-point scale (0=unable, 10=at pre-stroke levels). Data were tallied and the frequency of responses were reported.

RESULTS: The majority (58.8%) of the N=17 Needs Assessment respondents indicated no community activity. N=22 participants completed the WHOQoL-BREF. Average ratings for each Participation dimension ranged from 3.36–3.86/5 points. N=20 participants completed the PSFS, with the average rating =4.00.

CONCLUSION: The majority of these chronic stroke survivors are experiencing reduced Participation including limited community-integration, isolation, moderate quality of life, and low satisfaction with occupational performance. The results suggest that impairment-reduction focused OT may not adequately prepare survivors for long-term Participation.

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