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“From Training to Reality” - a Longitudinal Analysis of a Two-year Holistic Recovery Journey of a Young Female Patient with Stroke

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Introduction

Occupational therapy focuses on the engagement of meaningful activities in daily life to optimize patients’ functional potential and quality of life. The traditional models of rehabilitation are underpinned by medical principles of cure which focus on physical function. There has been a growing recognition of holistic approach which stresses on the well-being of patients through the development of mind and body to enhance the recovery process. Under this approach, disability is perceived in the context of the individual patient. Interactions between the biological, psychological, social and environmental aspects are essential for effective rehabilitation. In light of the holistic approach, the Occupational Lifestyle Redesign Programme (OLSR) has been adopted for psychosocial development of patients. Patients benefit from client-centred psychosocial group training, community reintegration training and learning adaptive strategy training based on their individual needs.

Objectives

This study aims at exploring the effectiveness of OLSR, which integrated client-centred psychosocial group trainings through developing new life roles and strengthening family support for the recovery of a female patient after stroke.

Methodology

A neurological female out-patient, aged 35, of the Occupational Therapy Department at the Kowloon Hospital, was being followed intensively through unstructured interviews with physical and client-centred psychosocial trainings to understand her recovery pathway since December 2014. Her progresses in physical function, community living, psychosocial well-being (self-esteem, well-being, depression,

self-efficacy and hope levels) were measured.

Result

This study shows that there were significant improvements in a 24-month period after an effective holistic approach. Significant improvements were noticeable both physically and psychologically:

- physical function restored by 27%;
- independent living in the community improved by 71%;
- positive psychosocial well-being enhanced by 56%;
- level of hope advanced by 38%;
- perceived self-efficacy in coping with stressful life events strengthened to a full score;
- self-esteem progressed from low self-esteem to normal;
- depressive mood reduced from minimal depression to normal.

The road to stroke recovery is often long and winding. Positive thinking from patient and family members is crucial. The patient's inner voice of "I am not unable. I am just not doing it well." is echoed by family members' reassurance that "She is improving every day." Through the above holistic approach, the patient has not only redeveloped new life roles but has also become an active volunteer under the patient empowerment programme. Her next goal has now become "returning to work," which is under planning at the time of writing.

The holistic approach incorporating OLSR with client-centred psychosocial group trainings and family support has indicated that the approach is more effective in promoting the psychosocial well-being and community reintegration for young patients who have suffered from stroke.