How nurses’ involvement in research can support patient participation in rehabilitation

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Introduction

Patient participation is essential in rehabilitation after spinal cord injury to support the recovery and ability to achieve control and independence in life. However, participation is complex and there is a lack of knowledge, techniques and aids that take into account the patients’ different needs and preferences. In a PhD study we try to develop an approach and clinical aids to support the patient’s participation in rehabilitation and path towards a meaningful life after a spinal cord injury.

Methods

Knowledge develops and practice changes as the iterative process of action research combines interaction, dialog, action in practice and research. Together with seven nurses as co-researchers data is generated, analyzed, discussed, and the results are implemented at the centre after thorough evaluations. The success rate for implementation and for improving patient participation is studied 3 and 6 months after full implementation.

Results

A strong support from the management has enabled the co-researchers to participate actively throughout the study. The preliminary results indicates that the dynamic reflective process has increased the co-researchers’ knowledge, competences and skills regarding patient participation. They are empowered to critically view and actively change their practice towards a more individual patient participation and their increased professional awareness also affects their contribution to improvement of rehabilitation nursing in general.

Conclusions

The involvement of nurses in research support patient participation in rehabilitation as they develop new aids and increase their professional attitude towards patient participation. The long-term overall effect will be studied and reported prior to dissemination in 2019.