

(P21) TWO PHYSIOTHERAPY MODELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY FOR PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

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People with multiple sclerosis (MS) seek physiotherapy to improve function and balance. A number of service-delivery models are utilized to achieve this goal. Currently there is strong evidence supporting physiotherapist-to-patient (1:1) center- and home-based therapy. There is little to support independent home or group programs for people with MS.

The study aimed to explore whether people with MS improve function when undertaking the same exercises via two different delivery modes, exercising at home independently and exercising in the community within a group setting with a physiotherapist, and what factors may influence a person's exercise success. Forty-five subjects were recruited. After initial assessment, subjects were randomly allocated to either home exercise (HE) or group exercise (GE). Both groups practiced the same exercise programs, modified to disability level, for 1 hour, twice per week. All participants had an 8-week waiting period, followed by an 8-week exercise program and an 8-week follow-up. Measurement included grip strength, 10-m, 6-minute walk tests (6MWT), Berg Balance Scale (BBS), and Nine-Hole Peg Test. Participation measurement included Quality of Life (QOL) Psychosocial Adjustment to Illness Scale and Modified Fatigue Impact Scale (MFIS). Tests were carried out at initial assessment and at the end of each 8-week block. The QOL and MFIS were completed at 0 and 24 weeks only. A number of personal and environmental factors were investigated as possible factors influencing functional outcomes. A mixed-design two-way analysis of variance was utilized to analyze the data, with a P value of <.008 as significant.

Results showed significant improvements in the BBS (P < .006) and MFIS (P < .003) for GE compared with HE. GE subjects did more exercise than HE subjects (P < .001), and inactive subjects were less likely to comply with exercise (P < .003).

Conclusion: People with MS are likely to benefit from physiotherapy to improve functions in a group setting with structured supervision.

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