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Using the ICF to explore the perception of physical activity in persons with late effects of polio

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Title of abstract:

Using the ICF to explore the perception of physical activity in persons with late effects of polio

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ABSTRACT

Background: Persons aging with a physical disability is advised to be physically active but it may be challenging due to their condition and due to personal and environmental barriers.

One group of persons aging with disability is those with late effects of polio. Late effects of polio are characterized by new impairments that lead to activity limitations, participation restrictions and most likely a sedentary behavior. To the best of our knowledge no study has focused on the interplay between functioning and disability and personal and environmental factors in relation to physical activity in persons with late effects of polio.

Purpose: To explore the perception of physical activity and factors that could be perceived as facilitators of and barriers to physical activity in persons with late effects of polio.

Methods: Fifteen community-dwelling ambulatory persons with late effects of polio were interviewed in this explorative qualitative study. Individual semi-structured interviews were performed and analyzed with a directed content analysis. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) was used as framework when data were analyzed.

Results: Overall, five subcategories were categorized within the ICF part Functioning and Disability (My impairments are the main barrier to physical activity; Physical activity makes me feel in control of my disability; Wanting to fit in; Change in physical activity over time; Finding time for physical activity) and six subcategories were categorized within the ICF part Personal and Environmental factors (My personality keeps me active; Past experiences have shaped me; Support from others keep me active; Accessible physical environment promotes

physical activity; Season and climate impacts on physical activity; Mobility devices support physical activity).

Conclusion: The persons with late effect of polio have a positive perception of physical activity and its health benefits. The results highlight a number of factors that could be perceived as facilitators of and barriers to engagement in physical activity. The facilitators and barriers emerged in all components of the ICF. Physical activity is facilitated by support from close relations, knowledgeable health care professionals and accessible environments. Thus, persons with late effects of polio need individualised support to be able to create strategies to adjust and perform physical activity based on their disability, and facilitators of and barriers to physical activity.

Implications: Physical activity needs to be approached in a broad sense and considering personal and environmental factors and their relation to physical activity. Health care professionals need to be knowledgeable regarding the disability in order to advice on individualised physical activity in this population.

Key words: Exercise; Post poliomyelitis syndrome; Qualitative research

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Ethics approval: The study was approved by the Regional Ethical Review Board in Lund, Sweden (Dnr 2013/403).

Brief biography: Cecilia Winberg, certified specialist physiotherapist in neurology has over 20 years clinical experience and is presently holding a position as a PhD-student at Lund University. She will defend her thesis in rehabilitation medicine the 18th of December, 2014. The thesis is entitled "Physical activity in persons with late effects of polio" and focuses on physical activity in persons aging with a neurological disability and factors mediating physical activity. She is also a member of the national board of the Swedish Association of Physiotherapists and a boardmember in the section of Neurology which is a subgroup within the association. Cecilia works part-time at a private clinic treating persons with neurological disability.

Information concerning any presentations: This study has not been presented elsewhere and is not published.