

Background

The ultimate goal of physiotherapy rehabilitation programs for young adults with disabilities is to enhance participation in meaningful life roles. Arts-based activities, theatre, and skill training within real-life community contexts have a dynamic impact on rehabilitation interventions targeting participation, by strengthening motivation, supporting activity engagement and promoting neuroplastic processes.

Objectives

This case study aims to describe the implementation of a physiotherapy rehabilitation program for a youth with cerebral palsy, using her preparation for and participation in a community music-theatrical performance, as a motivation. The role in the performance guided the adaptation and reconsideration of the goals of physiotherapy program, aligning therapeutic interventions with meaningful participation goals for the youth herself and her family.

Methods

The participant is a 21-year-old female youth with cerebral palsy, classified at GMFCS IV, MACS II, CFCS II, and EDACS II. She has a strong interest in theatre and demonstrates high motivation for active engagement in artistic events. Her personal goals and enthusiasm for performing arts informed the design and goal setting of the physiotherapy program. The rehabilitation program ran from May 2023 to December 2023, coinciding with the preparation for a community music-theatrical performance, with physiotherapy sessions conducted three times per week. Participation was voluntary and supported by both the participant and her family. Goals were regularly reassessed based on her and her caregivers' preferences. The theatrical role was adapted to her functional level under guidance from the director and choreographer, with physiotherapists assuming corresponding performance roles on stage, to enrich the routine of physiotherapeutic program. Complementary activities included artistic workshops, outdoor rehearsals, camps, and multidisciplinary collaboration with other therapists, providing meaningful opportunities for participation, skill practice, reinforcing motivation, and social engagement.

Results

Participation-driven motivation significantly enhanced active engagement in the rehabilitation program. While physiotherapy addresses body structures and function, the theatre context provided both the motivation and the opportunity to actively use these skills within a meaningful performance. Integrating therapy with community-based activities revealed functional and participation needs that might have remained unnoticed in a conventional, isolated therapeutic setting, highlighting the importance of real-life, participatory contexts in promoting functional and social gains.

Conclusion

This case study demonstrates the value of ICF-based clinical reasoning and participation-oriented goal setting in physiotherapy rehabilitation for individuals with severe motor impairments. Combining therapy with arts-based, community-focused

activities can enhance motivation, support neuroplastic and functional improvements, and promote participation in meaningful life Occupations.

References

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