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SOUTH AFRICAN CLIENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF ADAPTING TO THEIR WORKER ROLES AFTER REHABILITATION

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Abstract

This research study focused on the barriers and facilitators that people with back injuries perceive and experience when returning to work after rehabilitation. It also explored the adaptation process that these individuals experience when returning to their worker role. Qualitative research methods were used in order to explore the research question. Participants were selected by means of simple random sampling and the data were collected by means of semi-structured focus groups. Some methods of adaptation to the worker role after rehabilitation included: taking control of yourself, developing competency in your worker role and being aware of and utilising your own choice of medical intervention. These results indicated that Occupational Therapists needs to reassess their role within the wider context of the helping professions where they should become more involved in on the job evaluations, work placements and training of back injured individuals. These results proposed the development of a conceptual model of adaptation that would aid Occupational Therapists in assessing a back injured client. The conceptual model would contribute to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy.