

0192

Home care staff experiences of assistive devices at work - an explorative study

Ingvor Pettersson, Gunilla Fahlström

Örebro University, Division of Occupational Therapy, Sweden

Introduction: The home can be an arena for rehabilitation and care: therefore it also serves as a work place for occupational groups such as home care staff and occupational therapists.

Home care staff are exposed daily to assistive devices and this may influence their care of and relation to the recipients as well as impact the relationship with and work of other team members such as occupational therapists.

Objectives: To explore home care staff experiences in relation to assistive devices and the use of assistive device at work.

Methods: Individual conversational interviews with 14 home care staff were used. The interview guide included invitations to talk about experiences and the significance of working with assistive devices. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the data.

Results: A broad and varied meaning attached to the use of assistive devices at work emerged in three themes. In "Staff's role at work in relation to assistive devices", different roles emerged in relation to knowledge and instruction as well as safeguarding the user. "Assistive devices as a product and their significance for staff" showed that devices were an integrated part of staff work in the users' home. Devices influenced staff feelings and cooperation, and were of importance in relation to time and finance. Regarding "Assistive devices and their significance for the user from the staff's perspective" the staff felt that devices affected the user emotionally as well as being prerequisites for the user's ability to cope with everyday life.

Conclusion: The study demonstrates that assistive devices play an important role for home care staff.

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy: An increased understanding of home care staff knowledge about, work with and experience from assistive devices could contribute to a better care and rehabilitation for home care recipients. If occupational therapists enhance their understanding about assistive devices from the perspective of home care staff it may also contribute to an improved cooperation.