

0448

To regain participation in occupations through human encounters - narratives from women with spinal cord injury

Gunilla Isaksson¹, Staffan Josephsson², Jan Lexell³, Lisa Skär¹

¹Luleå University of Technology, Luleå, Sweden, ²Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden, ³Lund University Hospital, Lund, Sweden

Introduction: Persons with disabilities often have to change their performance in daily occupations and may require social support from persons in their social network to be able to participate in occupations that are purposeful and meaningful.

Purpose: To gain an understanding of how women with spinal cord injury (SCI) experienced human encounters in occupations and how these influenced their participation.

Method: The data were collected through two or three in-depth interviews with 13 women (age 25 to 61 years) with SCI. Data analysis was carried out by using a paradigmatic analysis of narrative data, followed by an interpretation based on a narrative theory.

Results: The results showed a complexity where the women's experiences and acting in human encounters changed over time. In these human encounters the women struggled with conflicts, supported other persons that were insecure and reevaluated their apprehension about persons in their social network. These multidimensional human encounters thereby enabled them to regain participation in occupations.

Conclusions: This shows that human encounters are important for persons with disabilities so they can restructure their occupational identity and their needs for participation in occupations.

Contribution to the practice: The study also showed that the use of narratives as a tool within rehabilitation could lead to an increased understanding of the subjective changes that occur over time for a person with a disability.