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Citizens' perceptions of being transferred by formal carers using assistive devices

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Introduction

Occupational therapists are often responsible for ensuring the safety of formal carers' working environment. A review of international literature revealed that assistive devices (ADs) for lifting and transfer are effective in preventing carers' work-related injuries, and that hardly anything is known about the perspectives of citizens being transferred (1). This knowledge is an important prerequisite for respecting the citizens' integrity and in turn for improving intervention quality. The aim of the present study was therefore to investigate how community-living citizens perceive being transferred by formal carers with the aid of ADs.

Methods and materials

A semi-structured interview study was conducted. Citizens living in private homes or nursing homes; receiving formal care from the municipality; and who were able to be interviewed were included (N=109). Their median age was 82 (41-103) years; 50% were men; and 69% lived alone.

Results

The different kinds of help for transfer given and devices used were documented, e.g. help to shower and getting dressed were most frequent, and an electrical bed the most common device. Although it varied for different transfer situations and ADs, most citizens were satisfied and felt safe, while fewer felt comfortable. Reasons for low assessments were given. Only 16% were involved in the selection of ADs. However, 80% were satisfied with that.

Conclusion and implications for praxis

The study is one of the very first giving detailed information about citizens' perceptions of how it is to receive help for transfer involving the use of ADs. The study identified discrepancies between the citizens feeling of comfort and safety/satisfaction, and it also indicated how the help situation may be improved. The fact that the citizens mainly were satisfied with the use of AT is important knowledge when implementing assistive devices in the formal carers' working environment, since the opposite often is believed (1).

Reference

(1). Brandt Å et al. Review: Assistive technology for the benefit of users and carers. In Eizmendi G, Azkoitia JM, Craddock GM. Challenges for assistive technology, AAATE 07. Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2007. P. 569-572.