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The role of occupational therapy in community for clients with cervical spinal cord injury

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Introduction

It is very difficult for persons with cervical spinal cord injury (SCI) to live alone and get work. Our client with C5 function level accomplished both things in March 2009, 36 years after his injury.

Objectives

The purpose is to discuss the role of occupational therapy (OT) in community for clients with cervical SCI through this case.

Report

The client was a 54-year-old male who had quadriplegia of C5 function level. His important occupations were to get home and live alone, to get a job, to get the skill of removing urine partially using an external catheter.

First, urination practice was implemented in OT. He learned to insert a catheter into his bladder by himself using a self-help device and contriving his posture. However he consequently accepted putting in an indwelling catheter

A small apartment was found and improved for the client. We advised him how to modify his apartment and some adaptive equipment. He decided to work in an independent living center which was found by the case worker.

We helped the client make his own care plan. Then he submitted the care plan, but it wasn't approved by the city government because of the critical opinion that they couldn't provide a care-giver to use a personal computer (PC) at night in his apartment. Therefore we explained the meaning of PC occupation for him to the city government in care meetings and submitted our documents. As a result of our advocacy the care plan was accepted by the city government.

Some problems tended to make his mind snap, therefore we supported him psychologically. After moving into his new apartment, though some problems occurred, he was very satisfied with his life.

Discussion

OT roles in community are to advocate for clients in order to realize occupational justice, to advise on making house modifications, to improve occupational performance in ADL, to provide psychological support, to empower clients so that they can advice to care givers about their own care.

Conclusion

OT has important roles in community enabling clients with severe quadriplegia to lead the kind of lives they want.