

The Challenges of Occupational Therapy in Acute Renal Care

Oi Lam Chiu, Cindy Tan

St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, NSW, Australia

Introduction

A high percentage of patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) have multiple medical and social issues. Occupational Therapists in acute care setting are always challenged by the stability of patient's medical condition and expected length of stay on the acute ward. Patients admitted with CKD who require hemodialysis usually have to attend a dialysis unit 3 days a week to receive treatment. One treatment session can be up to approximately 4 hours. Fatigue is also the most common feedback given by the patients post hemodialysis. Patients usually attend hemodialysis in the hospital's dialysis unit, and will be away from the ward for 2-3 working days. This is a challenge for occupational therapist in acute care service to assess and implement interventions in appropriate times.

Objectives

As patient with CKD has complex medical issues, the changes of patient's medical conditions can be unpredictable during their admission. This is a challenge for an acute occupational therapist who has to deal with the pressure of length of stay, as well as patient's fluctuating condition. This paper describes the challenges of occupational therapy service in acute care setting by using a single case presentation.

Discussion

In this case presentation, it focuses on occupational therapy practice in patients with CKD in acute care settings. It describes a 65 year old lady with CKD who had two lower limb amputations and her transition from acute on chronic health condition to palliative stage in one lengthy hospital admission. The flexible nature of occupational therapy practice enables the therapist to adapt their interventions to the patient's fluctuating condition. The changes of occupational therapy interventions implemented throughout this patient's admission to address her behavioural, physical, cognitive, environmental and social needs will be discussed. This case highlighted the challenges that occupational therapist faced in acute care setting for patient who had CKD with complex medical and social conditions.