

An exploratory study of the referral factors of independent living training in long-term care

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The referral decision-making of case manager for functional training in the long-term care (LTC) has been a long-lasting puzzle in Taiwan. Along with the adoption of new need assessment tool and expansion of the scale of LTC services, a proper design of referral is expected to meet the needs of clients and national system.

Purpose: To develop prioritized referral factors of independent living training in long-term care

Methodology: Multi-staged process including evidence review, policy reflection, and nominal group method were used. Inclusion criteria of the supporting evidences of adult functional training were collected to make a pool of potential referral factors. Factors were revised to reflect the items in the new national need assessment tool. Nominal group discussions were conducted by inviting senior practitioners and scholars of physical therapy, occupational therapy, social workers and nurses. After the participants completed their own rating of the potential referral factors, descriptive analysis was applied.

Results: All 52 potential referral factors received ratings. According to the rating, factors can be classified into 17 ranks. Factors In the first rank are recent ADL change, environmental barrier at home and problems in using assistive device. Factors In the second rank are duration from the last onset of functional decline, fall in the past 12 months and living alone.

Conclusion: This is the first systemized study to apply multi-staged process to develop the preferred referral factors with evidence and expert supports. The methodology could serve as a reference for further decision-making requirements.

