

The vulnerable superhero - Spinal cord injury peer mentors' experiences of their role in Active Rehabilitation training programs, a qualitative study Treatment for Disabling Spasticity

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INTRODUCTION

A spinal cord injury (SCI) is the result of an injury that damages the spinal cord, resulting in severe changes in an individual's life. Studies have shown that when SCI individuals meet SCI peer mentors, it may have great impact on improving SCI individual's social participation, increased life satisfaction and factors that influence the Quality of Life. Not much research is conducted on SCI peer mentorship, and therefore the aim was to study how SCI peer mentors experienced the SCI peer mentor role in RG Active Rehabilitation training programs.

METHODS

Data was collected through individual semi structured interviews with nine SCI peer mentors and analyzed with qualitative content analysis.

RESULTS

Results presented the theme *Being a vulnerable superhero – a balancing act with rewards* and five categories, describing the SCI peer mentor role as complex, energy-intensive and demanding, but still rewarding and filled with happiness. The role contains a great responsibility in the meeting with SCI individuals going through a crisis and in trying to show the opportunities to live a full life after the injury. New novis knowledge was presented through the experiences of constituting the norm in a temporary community and that training during the training program was not seen as important as the individual meeting and relationships built.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion of the study showed that being a SCI peer mentor is a complex balance with high demands and provides insight for healthcare workers, such as physiotherapists, for what SCI peer mentorship can offer SCI patients in rehabilitation.