

Neurological Rehabilitation: Need to Look Beyond Symptom Relief: A Psycho-social Perspective

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Neurological disorder is recognized as disorder of the brain and nervous system. These disorders of different origin e.g. Toxic metabolic, vascular infection, immunological or traumatic (Leonard and Astun 1997), Neurological disorders pose a great public health challenges. They affect not mortality and morbidity but also enormous socio-economic impact on the patient and the family. In neurological rehabilitation patient goals are focused not only on improving independence in daily living activities, but also to enhance the socio-occupational functioning. In addition, the individual must be fit enough to perform the tasks of daily life, including taking part in spiritual and recreational activities. Participation in regular exercise and training appears to have significant effects on reducing disability and improving quality of life in older adults and in individuals with disability. Specialist rehabilitation services play a vital role in management of patients admitted to hospital by taking patients after their immediate medical and surgical needs have been met. Very highly trained rehabilitation professionals are in short supply. Rehabilitation is a process of assessment, treatment and management by which the individual (and their family/carers) are supported to achieve their maximum potential for physical, cognitive, social and psychological function. Neurological rehabilitation requires multi disciplinary team for assessment, treatment and management, which includes (Neuro physician, Neuro psychologist, Neurosocial worker, and Rehabilitation trained nurse, Physiotherapist, Occupational therapist, and Speech and language therapist, Orthotic, Dietician).

The long duration of hospitalization and the process of the recovery of neurological disorders, underlines the importance of the rehabilitation. The focus is to emphasize the holistic intervention

approach to enhance well being and quality of life of the patients and their caregivers will be effective to bring better clinical outcomes. The psychological distress experienced by the patients, the investment of time and money by the family caregivers, the loss of social relationships, social supports, and unhealthy coping styles require to be addressed by the therapist. The burden of carers and their subsequent burnout cannot be marginalized.

Wehman (1989) found that the following programmes had to be addressed in helping people return to work:

- Getting to work on time
- Transport
- Inappropriate rule behavior in the work place
- Planning and sequencing work activities
- Remembering work task, inappropriate sexual behavior; cognitive deficits and personality problems hampers productivity in any occupation
- Families identify early signs and symptoms, relapse and deterioration help the patients in accessing service.

Subsequent to functional mobility and independence in ADL's intervention should focus primarily on vocational reintegration and community participation. Alternative models of supported employment for persons with neurological disability should be advocated. Since the patients are coming from rural and tribal areas where there are no super specialty hospitals and no rehabilitation experts there is a need for tele medicine services, to reach the unreached. Caregiver education is also essential as the most of the caregivers are not aware about the science and symptoms of the neurologi-

cal disorders. Vocational rehabilitation has to be augmented by the district rehabilitation centers, which helps livelihood expectations of the family members. Support groups for the caregivers at the community level are the need of the hour. The need of the patient during hospitalization, and after discharge from the hospital requires proper planning and delivery of services, which are available, accessible, and affordable. Welfare benefits which suit the neurological rehabilitation patient needs will have to be framed, and networking with the NGO's and civic organizations for mobility aids and appliances has become a perpetual exercise. Neuro rehabilitation is an emerging discipline which requires multi disciplinary approach targeting at multi dimensions of disability.

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