HEALTH OF PEOPLE WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY IN SINGAPORE: IMPLICATIONS FOR REHABILITATION PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

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Purpose: To describe the health of people with spinal cord injury (SCI) in Singapore

Methods: Demographic data, injury information and information about SCI-related secondary impairments, chronic conditions and their associated risk factors, medical and hospital utilisation, participation (Craig Handicap Assessment and Reporting Technique) and life satisfaction (Satisfaction with Life Scale) were collected via interviews from people living with traumatic SCI. Descriptive statistics were generated, and post-hoc between-group comparisons and correlations were conducted.

Results: On average, participants (50 men and 5 women) were aged 48.3±16.54 years and had had their SCIs for 5 years. Three quarters (78.2%) had tetraplegia. The most prevalent SCI-related secondary impairments were pain, spasms, bladder problems, bowel problems and oedema. Chronic conditions (e.g. diabetes, hypertension and obesity) and their associated risk factors (e.g. smoking and physical inactivity) were prevalent. Participation and life satisfaction scores were lower than those reported for similar populations cross-culturally.

Conclusion: People with SCI in Singapore report experiencing lower levels of health than the general population in Singapore. By focusing on community reintegration and health promotion, physiotherapists and other rehabilitation professionals may augment health outcomes and improve the quality of life of this population in Singapore.

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