

PERCEIVED EXTERNAL FACTORS LEADING TO THE RESUMPTION OF OCCUPATION FOLLOWING ACQUIRED AMPUTATION: A PILOT PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

- ⦿ Who am I?
- ⦿ Why choose this topic?
- ⦿ What is the problem?
- ⦿ Occupation Defined: Major roles or activities that are currently being held and that the person finds important.

INTRODUCTION

- Purpose: To determine a beginning understanding about the best ways in which those who have had amputations continue to live healthy, productive lives
 - Look for challenges faced, where successful and why
 - Focus on areas of occupation in Occupational Therapy

PREVIOUS LITERATURE

- ◉ Munin et al.: Successful prosthetic outcome related to many factors
- ◉ Schaffalitzky, Gallagher, Maclachlan, & Ryall: Interviewed prosthetists and prosthetic wearers on outcome measures important to patient goals in prosthetic prescription
- ◉ Murray: Meanings of the prosthesis to the amputee

WHAT'S MISSING?

- ◉ Quantitative vs. Qualitative - success
- ◉ Opinions of amputees mostly assessed in regards to prosthesis meaning

HYPOTHESIS

- There are identifiable external factors that enable prosthesis wearers, regarding their success, to resume occupations. Hypothesized factors include a support system and returning to normalcy.

METHODS

- Design: Qualitative- (phenomenological)
 - Definition: Looking into how people make sense of the world and accounts of their subjective experiences (Kuper, Reeves, Levingston, 2008)
- HSIRB approval

METHODS

- ◉ Subject Recruitment: Convenience sample
- ◉ Consent Document
- ◉ Demographic Profile
- ◉ Interview with digital recorder
- ◉ Thematic analysis of data
 - Independent, then with Chair
 - Looked for reoccurring and interesting phenomenological themes

FINDINGS: WORTH MENTION

- Internal factors not our focus, but found:
- “Perception”
 - Positive outlooks and mindsets
- “Premorbid Innovation”
 - Creativity present before amputation, utilized after amputation
- “Therapeutic Humor”
 - Using jokes and lightheartedness to get through tough issues

FINDINGS: “LEARN TO FALL”

- Sometimes need to first fail to be successful
 - “If you fall, you fall. You’re going to get hurt, but you aren’t going to get hurt that bad. I’ve fallen.”
- Small things matter
 - “Well you can’t sleep in it. That stinks. Getting up to go to the bathroom at night... and taking a shower can be a pain. But it’s not *that* bad.”
 - “It’s just the pain of putting it on. I don’t mean ‘pain’ pain, but it sucks putting it on every morning.”
 - Both interviewees later report how these issues became easier in time

“LEARN TO FALL”

○ Small things matter

- “Just day to day stuff, you know, take care of the kids, drive, being able to move fast if you have to right after one. I mean, just being able to do the smallest things... Anything that a person with two normal legs takes for granted every day.”

“LEARN TO FALL”

○ Prosthetic Challenges

- “Balance is the hardest thing. I said that a 1000 times, I know, but it’s the hardest thing to overcome. The bending over to grab something, especially a heavy object.”
- “You used to be able to take a step over and adjust yourself, and now you’re flatfooted, and not putting too much weight on your other leg, and not hurting your other ankle. These are the biggest things.”

“LEARN TO FALL”

○ Limitations

- “You just gotta put your mind to it and do it, you can’t just sit back and feel sorry about yourself. That’s the biggest limitation that anybody [has] is if they tell themselves that they can [or] can’t do it. Next thing you know, your only limitation is yourself... If you don’t do it, you don’t do it.”
- “Even if I had some limitations in there, I would’ve been okay with it. I am okay with it. But I just want to be able to do at least 80-90% of the same stuff I used to. If I can’t do a few things, I can’t do a few things.”

“FINDING OCCUPATIONAL BALANCE”

- ◉ Roles in life are disrupted and finding out how to balance the outcomes of the disruption
- ◉ Before amputation, identified with work role, now identify with family role
 - “I was never home before, I always worked 70 hours to 80 hours a week.”
 - “I could probably say my family life. It got a lot better...”

“FINDING OCCUPATIONAL BALANCE”

- Both participants stated this.
 - “I’m an at home dad... I’m going to try to go back to work this summer part time; I’ve already got a job set up... Soon I’ll be driving truck and delivering flowers and stuff. And that will be fun... I’m ready to go back to work, and do it all again.”
- Both participants referenced an increase in leisure, when able.
 - “I’m a hell of a cook now.”
 - “I ran last night for the first time on this leg and it was hard, it was different than my last [prosthesis], but I did it. I mean, I did it without falling.”

“EMPATHY MOTIVATES”

- Only other amputees can truly empathize with their situation. Receiving motivation from others, and giving it leads to success.
 - “I went to visit some older people that had lost [a] limb, and again, they were *stuck in their chairs*... and I just talked to them, and two of them had the courage to get up and try to do walking with a prosthetic after. They told me their biggest fear, wasn't a fear, but more of a hatred. They didn't want people working with them that were nothing wrong with them and didn't know what they felt like, or what they were dealing with.”

“DEVELOPING A SUPPORT GROUP”

○ Surrounded by complacency

- “I knew one guy I met after I got my leg cut off. He’s 50, but he seems to think everything limits him... I can just see it’s his attitude and the way his wife ‘Okays’ [his behavior].”

○ A close, trustworthy group

- “My fiancé has really helped me out a lot... if I had questions, I could always call [Hanger] right away and someone would talk to me. That was always a good thing, like being able to know you can count on your doctors, health care people, [and] the prosthetic people...”

“‘DISABLED’ STIGMA”

- How others see amputees and removing the stigma
- Employer Rejection
 - “The ability is still there, just can’t find the work. So I know I can still do whatever there is to do, just nobody wants to take a chance on hiring somebody that is my age and my, what they consider, disability.”

“‘DISABLED’ STIGMA”

⦿ Being like everybody else

- Desire to remove judgment, by being more ‘normal’:
- “I didn’t care what it took I wasn’t going to walk with a limp, and I was going to be able to walk stairs... People don’t know when I walk stairs, if I have pants on, that I have a prosthetic.”
- “Working full time, and go back to living what people consider normal. Just doing everything everybody else does. Go back to work... doing everything everybody else does without having disability or not worrying about that stuff anymore.”

“‘DISABLED’ STIGMA”

○ Being like everybody else

- “Just a lot of people treated me different right off the bat, they wanted me to be more, useless, than I actually was, it seemed like. Lots of people wanted me to just sit back and be catered to because of the things my whole family has been through, dealing with diabetes.”
- “It’s always the elephant in the room when someone sees it.”

“BLESSING IN DISGUISE”

○ Unexpected benefits

- “I didn’t have any issues or challenges after the amputation, I had more of an issue before.”
- “Like before I knew my kids, [but] I didn’t. I wasn’t a part of my kids’ lives, I was [just] their dad, because I worked all the time. Once that happened it was cool. I got to see them finish off their high schools and stuff, and before I probably wouldn’t have.”
- “Now, I can’t say I’m glad it happened, but a lot of cool things have happened since [the amputation occurred].”

“SAW IT COMING”

- Previous exposure and prior awareness to situation
 - “I knew I had a surgery day coming up, I could prepare. Where most people who have it happen... they don't see it coming. I got to see it coming. It prepares you a little bit better, than someone who loses it right away.”

“SAW IT COMING”

◉ Previous exposure

- “Just because I don’t want to be *stuck*. I’ve dealt with diabetes my whole life, my whole family has it. So I have seen people that have lost limbs and ended up just sitting in their chairs for the rest of their life until they kicked off. So, I didn’t want to be like that.”
- “I’ve had family members that lost limbs, so it gave me a ‘leg up.’ So it was traumatic, but not overwhelming. Maybe because I had some experience with that... [it] could have given me a little bit of an edge.”

LIMITATIONS

- ◉ Scope: 1 location
- ◉ Limited sample- 2 interviewees
- ◉ Demographically similar participants

CONCLUSION

- ⦿ External factors can be identified as leading to success from the opinion of the user.
- ⦿ Important to realize success is defined by the prosthesis user for each factor.
- ⦿ Resuming occupations is important for all amputees. It is necessary to understand what leads to their successes *in their opinion*, if plans are to be made to aid them to be the best of their current abilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further research
 - Larger study
 - Diverse pool
 - More than one location for pulling users
- Add a focus group review of factors with stakeholders after analysis

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QUESTIONS?