Physiotherapy assessment in reablement for community-dwelling older adults

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Introduction
- Reablement is a team-based interdisciplinary home-rehabilitation approach intending to improve the ability of self-dependency for people with or at risk of function decline.
- Physiotherapists (PTs) are responsible for assessments, development of rehabilitation plans and supervising home trainers (HTs), who carry out the training.
- Individual examinations and clinical reasoning are fundamental to tailored and individualized intervention and treatment.

Purpose
The aim of this study was to explore how division of labor in reablement teams affects the practice of physiotherapy assessment in reablement settings

Methods
Fieldwork was done in seven Norwegian reablement teams. Triads of PTs, HTs and users of reablement were included. 14 observations were conducted and videotaped. 14 individual interviews with PTs and HTs regarding division of labor and clinical reflections, were performed and audi-taped. Systematic content analysis was performed

Results
Two different types of teams emerged.
1. Strictly defined division of labor where the PTs were little involved in training interventions. Assessments were limited to standardized tools: The Canadian Occupational Performance Measure and Short Physical Performance Battery (COPM and SPPB). Training interventions based on this assessment were general and not very well tailored the patient.
2. Flexible structure influenced by interdisciplinary cooperation and discussions. COPM and SPPB were carried out in addition to functional analysis and examinations. The PTs were involved in training sessions, and could conduct an ongoing assessment through out the reablement period. This enabled an individual tailored intervention.

Discussion and conclusion
This study revealed that a flexible division of labor influenced by interdisciplinary cooperation raised opportunity to a thorough assessment. Ongoing examinations in addition to use of standardized measurement tools were done. Interdisciplinary cooperation enriched the assessment. This led to more individualized and customized training interventions. Organization type of reablement teams are essential for the quality of practice.

Recommendations
Thorough assessments should be carried out as a fundament for the individual intervention. Flexible organization of the reablement team and interdisciplinary cooperation, is a prerequisite to enable optimal assessments.

Acknowledgements
Thanks to all participants from the included reablement teams.
The Norwegian Fund for Post-Graduate Training in Physiotherapy funded the study.

Declaration of interest
The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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