



Testing and Evaluating a Spinal Cord Injury Self-Management Program: A Pilot Study

Hsiao-Yu Chen ,BSc, MSc, Ph.D, RN

Professor of Nursing, Department of Nursing, National Taichung University of Science and Technology, Taiwan

Background:

SCI causes severe disability, leading to substantial complications for the rest of life. The long-term care needs of patients with SCI are a series of dynamic processes for rebuilding life and include physical care and complication prevention, life planning, social support, determining the value of existence, and sexual satisfaction.

Purpose:

The aim of this study was to test and evaluate the usefulness of a spinal cord injury (SCI) self-management program.

Methods:

The pilot study had a quasiexperimental pretest–posttest design. Eligible participants were recruited from the Spinal Injury Association in Taiwan. All data were collected between March and May 2014. The self-management program was developed on the basis of a quality study that focused on the perceptions and experiences of patients with SCI regarding their long-term care needs. All participants were evaluated using instruments for collecting personal information and assessing self-efficacy and health status as well as indicators at the baseline and 5 weeks after a home visit intervention. The study was approved by an ethical review board (cRREC-101-019).

Results:

A total of 9 participants, 8 men and 1 woman, participated in this pilot study; the average age was 44 years and the average number of months since injury was 31.33 (± 11.85). Most of the patients (44.4%) were injured in road accidents. The study results showed that the range of their score on the self-efficacy scale was 62.22–68.56 and that on the health status scale was 2.89–3.00 (from 1, not healthy, to 5, very healthy). However, no statistically significant differences were observed between the pretest and posttest scores regarding the self-efficacy and the health status. Moreover, the mean was 3.7 (from 1, not useful, to 5, very useful) on the participants' perception of the usefulness of the program.

Conclusion/Implications for practice:

The study tested and evaluated the usefulness of a self-management program for patients with SCI. The results showed no difference between the pretest and posttest scores. Therefore, a longitudinal study in which all participants are evaluated using instruments for collecting personal information and assessing self-efficacy and health status as well as indicators at the baseline and 3 and 6 months must be conducted.

Keywords: *spinal cord injury (SCI), self-management, quasiexperimental study*