



Psychological Barriers to Rehabilitation: A Clinical Case Series Study Integrating TEAM-CBT and NLP

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Abstract:

Rehabilitation is commonly approached as a process of physical recovery; however, clinical practice indicates that progress is often hindered by underlying psychological barriers. Across rehabilitation settings, patients frequently exhibit fear of activity, avoidance behaviour, self-critical beliefs, and catastrophic interpretations of bodily sensations, which interfere with adherence to therapeutic protocols. The present study investigates the influence of cognitive and emotional factors on rehabilitation outcomes and examines the effectiveness of an integrated TEAM-CBT (Testing, Empathy, Agenda Setting, Methods) and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) intervention.

A clinical case series design was employed involving 25 patients from diverse rehabilitation contexts, including geriatric care, cardiac recovery, vestibular disorders, stroke rehabilitation, and chronic conditions. Each case underwent 8-12 structured sessions, with progress evaluated using standardized measures, behavioural indicators, and session-wise tracking of functional engagement.

The findings indicate that fear-avoidance patterns, catastrophizing, and emotional reasoning consistently contributed to reduced participation in rehabilitation activities. Interventions targeting resistance through structured agenda setting, combined with graded exposure and cognitive restructuring, resulted in improved adherence, increased activity levels, and enhanced emotional regulation. NLP-based techniques further supported rapid stabilization during high-anxiety states.

The study highlights that recovery is significantly shaped by patients' interpretations of their symptoms rather than the symptoms alone. Integrating structured psychological interventions within rehabilitation frameworks can enhance engagement and accelerate recovery. TEAM-CBT offers a practical and adaptable model for addressing transdiagnostic psychological barriers across multidisciplinary settings.

Keywords:

Behavioural activation, case series study, cognitive distortions, fear-avoidance behaviour, multidisciplinary rehabilitation, rehabilitation psychology, TEAM-CBT.