

Lecture

Access to Physical Therapy Services for People with Dementia/ Cognitive Decline during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

In the context of COVID-19 pandemic, it is vital to provide adequate care to people with dementia. Rehabilitation services are recognized as essential during the pandemic to optimise physical and cognitive functioning to reduce disability. This presentation aimed to characterize the most important barriers in COVID-19 pandemic for the rehabilitation process of people with dementia/cognitive decline, according to the perspective of physiotherapists with expertise in the field. The Portuguese Association of Physiotherapists, in partnership with the Alzheimer Portugal Association, conducted a data collection of the Physiotherapists' perceptions about the access to physical therapy services for people with dementia/cognitive impairment during the first 6 months of the COVID-19 pandemic. The results indicate 3 main barriers to access/obtain good results in the rehabilitation process of these people: interruption of rehabilitation processes/restricted access to specialized follow-up in situations of prophylactic isolation; break in the routine of the person with dementia and caregiver; breaking on social interaction (isolation, distancing from their social networks). According to these barriers and thinking that we may be prepared for future prophylactic scenarios in the COVID-19 context, physiotherapists need to develop adequate and virtual solutions for promoting continuum of physiotherapy care.

