

Non-specific chronic low back pain patients' expectations toward physiotherapists

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Introduction

Expectations influence clinical decision making, relationship and outcome. It is thus **essential to grasp what patients suffering from non-specific chronic low back pain (NSCLBP) expect from physiotherapists (PTs)**.

Moreover, the WCPT and other professional associations recommend taking patients' expectations into consideration during PT intervention.

Purpose

Identify NSCLBP patients' expectations toward physiotherapists before a 3-week rehabilitation program, and their perceived fulfilment 1 month after the program.



Participants

- 9♀, 11♂
- 41.0 ± 10.5 y.o.
- 4.3 ± 3.5 y. symptoms duration
- 3 on sick leave, 2 professional retraining



Methods

- Semi-structured interviews before and after the program.
- Coding of each interview by 1 anthropologist and 1 PT
- Crossed content analysis by 2 anthropologists and 2 PTs

☞ **Interdisciplinary analysis**

Results

Area of expectations	Expectations before the program	Fulfilment of expectations during program
Rehabilitation program process	Active rehabilitation Technical, gestural and relational individualisation during individual sessions Social support during group sessions.	Most patients considered their expectations as met Expectations unmet when rehabilitation's and patient's goals diverged.
Rehabilitation outcome	Pain reduction, strengthening, return to valued activities, improved well-being.	Mitigated pain relief When they showed personal involvement and attention, PTs were not held responsible for unmet expectations of clinical outcome.
Relational expectations	Listening, mutual trust, support and personalisation Patients' views diverged if PTs should address emotional issues or not.	
PTs' role	Deal with physical issues Provide a functional diagnosis Counselling, explanations and skill development.	PTs generally played the expected role Shift from responsibility towards the PT to responsibility towards oneself, support of PT still expected.

Discussion & Conclusions

- Convergence of patients' and program's **goals** was fundamental.
- **Patient-centred care and therapeutic alliance** were central
- Expectations of **commitment and personal adaptation** predominated over clinical outcome
- Further research should investigate factors that shape and influence patients' expectations.

Recommendations

Shared vision of rehabilitation is crucial to meet patient's expectations

☞ **Discuss goals with the patients**

Personalised care is expected in all its dimensions

☞ **Adjust rehabilitation, interaction and touch to the person**

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Ethics

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