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Structured Peer Support for Spinal Cord Injury: A Three-Pillar Approach to Enhancing Community Reintegration

Topic: Miscellaneous

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BACKGROUND

Peer support provides emotional and practical guidance from individuals with shared experiences. Spinal cord injury (SCI), whether from trauma or non-traumatic causes, leads to significant physical, sensory, and functional limitations. SCI often results in profound impairment, requiring individuals to adapt to their new reality, develop adaptive techniques, and navigate psychosocial challenges, including interpersonal relationships. While rehabilitation focuses on physical recovery and adaptive strategies, the psychological and emotional impact of SCI is sometimes overlooked. Early mental health interventions and support are essential to help individuals cope with loss and adjustment. However, due to high patient volumes, professional emotional support may be insufficient, leaving a critical gap in care.

This descriptive mixed-methods study explores a three-pillar peer support system to bridge this gap. The first pillar, 'Training and Standardization', ensures peer supporters receive structured training in medical knowledge, adaptive techniques, communication, and counseling skills to prevent misinformation. The second pillar, 'Multidisciplinary Collaboration', integrates peer support within a healthcare framework, involving professionals such as social workers and rehabilitation specialists to complement clinical care. The third pillar, 'Feedback and Supervision', establishes ongoing evaluation and guidance to maintain quality and effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

By analyzing past training programs, incorporating trainee feedback, and reviewing existing literature, this study aims to develop a standardized peer support framework. A structured program can enhance the well-being of individuals with SCI and facilitate positive community reintegration.

Statement of Disclosures

None

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