

The Occupational Performance Profile, Quality of Life and Community Reintegration of Patients with Burn Injuries Post-Discharge in the North West Province, South Africa

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Introduction: There are limited rehabilitation services for patients with burn injuries living in under resourced communities in South Africa. There is little follow up of these patients even though there is evidence that rehabilitation should continue for up to two years post discharge.

Aim: This study investigated the outcomes for patients post discharge from a burns unit in terms of their return to their previous occupational performance activity profile, quality of life (QoL), community reintegration and access to occupational therapy.

Methods: A descriptive longitudinal study was used to assess 28 adult participants admitted to Tshepong Hospital Burns Unit in the North West Province on discharge, at one month and six months post discharge.

Results: The participants returned to their previous occupational performance levels at six months after the time spent on work and home maintenance had decreased significantly at one month post discharge. In terms of community integration only the social integration was affected with female participants achieving high home, productivity and total integration scores. Participants reported pain/discomfort and anxiety/depression affected their QoL which with community reintegration was moderately associated with the depth and extent of the burn injuries. Distance from health services and lack of finances prevented the participants from accessing occupational therapy which was associated with poor QoL.

Conclusion: Results support the recommendations for community based occupational therapy to improve rehabilitation outcomes and the establishment of support groups for patients with burn injuries in community settings to assist with QoL and reintegration challenges faced by these patients.