Challenges in the process of cross border repatriation between South Africa and Malawi: a case study of two clients with spinal cord injury post rehabilitation at Western Cape Rehabilitation Centre.

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Outline

• Background

• Repatriation Process

• Challenges Experienced

• Discussion

• Conclusion

• Acknowledgements
Background

• Complexity of long-term care for person with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI).

• Difficulty finding suitable discharge environments.

• No family support in South Africa = long-term placement problems.

• 2 cases at WCRC – clients repatriated back to home country, Malawi.
Repatriation Process

• Ground work (documentation/family contact) - Social Workers at WCRC.

• International Organisation for Migration - paperwork, financial support.

• OT and Doctor escorted clients from Cape Town to Blantyre, Malawi.

• Clients transported to Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital for family training.

• Networking with other health care professionals.

• Transport of clients to their homes.
Challenges Experienced

• Change from high to low resource setting.
Cape Town, WCRC
Challenges Experienced

- Change from high to low resource setting.
- Language barrier – English to Chichewa.
- General awareness and education on Spinal Cord Injury.
- Cultural and religious beliefs of family members.
- Lack of time to process and accept.
- Lack of facilities for family members during family training.
- Limited Occupational Therapists.
Discussion

• The importance of education – for client and family.

• Communication in a language the client and family understand.

• Time for processing the condition – further support needed in community.

• Weekend leave is invaluable in preparing for re-integration.
Conclusion

• Complexity of long-term care for person with SCI.

• Multiple challenges associated with repatriation.

• Important themes which should inform OT practice:
  • The importance of education – for client and family.
  • Communication in a language the client and family understand.
  • Time for processing the condition.
  • Weekend leave is invaluable.
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