INTRODUCTION

Just as in other countries, in Québec (Canada), rehabilitation centres that treat stroke survivors ultimately aim to enhance the individual’s functioning and social participation [1]. Rehabilitation professionals value participation, however they mostly address impairments and activity limitations, within a biomedical framework [2]. Aphasia restricts or decreases social participation, even following rehabilitation [3], and affects family members [4].

Going shopping includes specific participation situations, such as planning the activity, arranging for transportation, orienting oneself in a shopping mall, having a conversation with a stranger, purchasing goods, and understanding directions or information, activities that can be difficult for people with communication impairment.

OBJECTIVE

To explore the role of different factors, including rehabilitation, in the experience of shopping as perceived by persons with aphasia (PWAs) and their family members (FMs).

METHODS

Participants

- 8 PWAs and 8 FMs
- 4 focus groups: 2 groups of PWAs, 2 groups of FMs
- Aphasia following stroke (7) or TBI (1); varied age and aphasia severity
- FMs: 4 spouses, 3 parents, 1 sister

Data collection

- 5 questions including: “How did the rehabilitation centre prepare you and/or your family member to go to shopping malls?”
- Statements written in real time and recorded

Data analysis

- Content analysis of 418 statements according to Strauss & Corbin’s principles [5].

RESULTS

Results are presented in three subgroups of shoppers: independent, partially independent and dependent

4 independent shoppers

- Had shopping-oriented therapy during rehabilitation (outings or simulated shopping activities); felt good in shopping malls
- Had high self-confidence
- Their FMs knew what kind of help they needed

“When I am not making myself understood I say ‘Wait! I have aphasia!’” (Linda, PWA)

“I am confident she will not make further mistakes when paying with her card” (Victor, FM)

2 partially independent shoppers

- Had some shopping-oriented therapy in rehabilitation via simulated shopping activities
- Had low self-confidence
- Their FMs did not know how to help them, but accompanied the PWA to shop

“My relatives are worried that I fall, but I have a walker!” (Simone, PWA)

“It is difficult because my sister used to take care of my own finances before the onset of aphasia” (Clara, FM)

2 dependent shoppers

- Did not have any shopping-oriented therapy in rehabilitation
- Waited to be “better” to go out
- Their FMs did not know how to help them and did all the shopping

“It became too complicated to go shopping malls; I don’t want to be a burden for my family” (John, PWA)

“They never prepared my son to go to shopping malls, for example” (Arthur, FM)

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

- Rehabilitation can have a positive and enhancing role in the participation of people who have aphasia.
- Severity of aphasia and motor limitations are not the only predictors of the level of autonomy of people with aphasia in shopping malls.
- Family members need to learn how to help the person with aphasia.
- Addressing personal factors such as self-confidence is necessary to the success of the rehabilitation process.
- Offering shopping-oriented therapy tailored around the needs and interests of clients facilitates independence.
- Using the shopping mall environment can offer an eco-friendly rehabilitation context for rehabilitation professionals, aphasic persons and their family members.

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DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The authors have no relevant financial or nonfinancial relationship to disclose.

REFERENCES


