

Empowering: the experiences of exercise among heart transplantation patients in Taiwan

鄭綺

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摘要

Abstract

AIM: To explore the experiences of exercise among Taiwanese heart transplant patients on the basis of a grounded theory. **BACKGROUND:** Although studies conducted around the world have proven how important exercise is to heart transplant patients, little information was found about heart transplant patients' exercise experience. In addition, because of different cultural backgrounds, people in Taiwan do not care about 'regular exercise' as much as Americans and Europeans do. Therefore, it is very important to find ways so that they can value 'regular exercise.'
METHODS: In-depth interviews were undertaken with a purposive sample of eight heart transplant patients. Data was analysed by repeated verification. **RESULTS:** Eight valid cases were separately and thoroughly interviewed while they were exercising at a sports medical centre. The results revealed that 'empowering the new heart' is the core reason for their exercise. During the exercise training process, every participant felt that his or her new heart was filled with power or energy. The 'hardness and endurance' in terms of feeling discomfort in the body was identified at the beginning of post-surgical exercise training. Throughout the process of empowerment, patients experienced the following five interactive behaviour categories: 'self-protection', 'sharing', 'being watched and cared for', 'being aware of the benefits', and 'strengthening the new heart'. **CONCLUSIONS:** Exercise can empower the new heart. After the exercise training, all patients felt that their new hearts were empowered with energy and vigour, and thus were willing to continue exercising. They even expanded their regimen to include folk therapies such as Tai Chi and breathing exercises.