

INTRODUCTION

Among the lower-limb amputee population, higher levels of mobility were associated with higher quality of life, and lower levels of mobility were associated with positive scores for PTSD or depression. Positive mental health indicators are crucial for optimal functioning, as the presence of adverse mental health symptoms can exacerbate physical functional limitations among those with amputations¹.

Previous studies have shown that amputees participating in interdisciplinary rehabilitation are able to achieve mobility levels similar to those of healthy people in the same age group.² In addition to physical recovery programmes, individuals should undergo mental state evaluation routine follow-ups for a coordinated rehabilitation connecting physical and psychological aspects³.

The purpose of this study was conducted to assess the interest of prosthetic practitioners on being increasingly conscious about their patients' mental conditions. Moreover, this study aimed to understand how different members of the multidisciplinary team in charge of amputee rehabilitation view the relationship between mobility, lifestyle, and mental health, as well as what instruments they use to analyse their patients' mobility characteristics.

METHODS

The points of view of different practitioners regarding the influence of mental health on the mobility of their patients and on their practices concerning mobility indicators were assessed through a quantitative research study: a forced-choice questionnaire aimed at professionals in the Orthotics and Prosthetics field, where cross-sectional information about patient mobility outcomes, daily professional practice, and their views on patients' mental health was collected. 16 statements were evaluated, on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

This questionnaire was published online and shared on social networks and via email. The participation of respondents was voluntary, and the study was cross-sectional, not prioritizing any populational target group. 37 people completed voluntarily the online questionnaire, with roles in the field ranging from CPOs (Certified Prosthetics and Orthotists) to Physicians, Occupational Therapists, Prosthetist Trainees and Rehabilitation Clinic Owners. Due to the lack of relationship with the topic studied, two additional participants who had defined their roles as outside of this scope were excluded from the analysis of results,

RESULTS

The sample (n=35) consists mostly (63.64%) of people aged 26-41, and the remainder being composed of 21.21% of people between 42-57, 12.12% aged 58-76 and the rest 6.06% by people under 25.

From the results of this questionnaire, it is noteworthy that 75.75% of the respondents agree to some extent that mental health is an important part of the amputee assessment and recovery process. It is also patent in the survey results that, when asked if their patients struggled with mental health problems (within the spectrum of anxiety and depression), 30.03% of the respondents answered positively for a range of 21-40% of their patients, and 36.36% for a range of 41-60%. 69.70% respondents consider prosthetic mobility to be strongly associated with quality-of-life and 75.76% agree that

patients will struggle more with mental health problems if they have less mobility. However, although 39.40% do not consider that the responsibility for keeping the patient physically active belongs to the prosthetist, 66.67% agree that if they had an easy-to-use, affordable system that helped the patient to remain active, they would do so. These opinions being stated, 81.82% of the participants showed some level of interest in receiving more information related to how mental health influences patient mobility outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that practitioners working in the rehabilitation of amputees are interested in helping their patients recover with more active mental health components, even though it is not currently a responsibility within their scope of practice. Furthermore, they see mobility indicators as useful tools to monitor their patients' activity and participation in the community, as well as indicators of their mental health and effectiveness of the rehabilitation process.

SIGNIFICANCE

The results of this survey prove to be potentially significant in the development of new products within O&P, as they show an evident interest and consciousness about the importance of psychological assessment components in rehabilitation. The impact of mobility potential in the psychological health of amputees is clearly perceived by the involved practitioners, and the monitorization of mobility indicators seems to be a powerful tool for aiding the multidisciplinary team in this assessment.

REFERENCES

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