

The Quality of Life of Transtibial Amputees: The Prosthetists Role

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Abstract : Background: During rehabilitation, the prosthetist establishes prosthetic and/or orthotic realistic goals and programmes as well as clinical outcome measures. They are well-positioned to improve the amputee's physical and psychosocial well-being. Objective: This study aims to explore the ways in which the prosthetist may be able to improve the holistic well-being of the amputee. Methods: Data was collected using a focus group discussion with 16 prosthetists at a medical facility in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Results: The findings indicate that amputees are encouraged to consider physical activities to improve their health. However, a major challenge experienced by the prosthetists was their lack of adequate psychosocial expertise, which affected their ability to offer emotional support. Additional factors such as language barriers, rotational systems, and unrealistic expectations further obstructed optimal service delivery. Conclusion: The prosthetists are adequately skilled in manufacturing the ideal prosthesis and encouraging physical exercise to promote the amputee's physical health. However, their lack of psychosocial training limits them in providing emotional support during rehabilitation. It is recommended that prosthetists are provided with professional training to provide emotional support as part of holistic healthcare. Clinical relevance: The intention of this study was to provide pertinent recommendations for prosthetists, enabling them to provide holistic quality care to their patients.

Keywords : psychological, social, well-being, amputee, prosthetist

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