Daily activity habits, energy conservation methods and ADL-training for patients with COPD: A qualitative study.

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Introduction
Patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) commonly have symptoms like dyspnea and fatigue that affect their occupational performance and activities of daily living (ADL), but there are few studies about COPD patients’ activity performance and how it can be supported in pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) 14.

Aim
The purpose of the study was to explore COPD patients’ experience of habits when performing daily activities, and how practicing daily life activities (ADL, training activity training) during pulmonary rehabilitation had been useful for energy conservation and coping.

Methods
A qualitative research design was chosen. The participants were interviewed 4 to 6 months after a 4 weeks inpatient pulmonary rehabilitation program.

Subject characteristics
- Soc. M/F: 2 / 4
- Age yrs: 55 to 70
- Live alone: 2
- Live together with family: 4

- Sociometric Classification of Severity and Stages of COPD (GOLD):
  - Stage 2, moderate COPD: 2
  - Stage 3, severe COPD: 4

- Activity problems:
  - Take a shower
  - Get dressed
  - Vacuuming
  - Cleaning the floor
  - Cleaning windows
  - Washing clothes
  - Lifting
  - Food preparation
  - Carry wood up indoor stairs
  - Carry groceries

The interviews were analyzed by means of phenomenological method and Systematic Text Condensation (STC) 7.

Results
The findings are summarized in four categories.

1) How the participants experience managing their daily life activities:
   - They want to be independent, and at the same time, struggling with the problem of fatigue
   - They manage some activities, but experience fatigue when trying to do all the activities throughout the day
   - The participants have found their own coping strategies for managing their daily life activities

2) Changing habits when performing activities:
   - The participants have their integrated daily activity habits
   - The head wants to, but the shortness of breath stops me
   - Changing habits for daily activities is an automatic process or a process that can be actively influenced by themselves

3) The experience with ADL-training carried out under guidance of an occupational therapist:
   - From resistance at the beginning of the ADL-training to increased confidence and self-efficacy
   - Practical ADL-training is a useful and necessary supplement to oral education about energy conservation methods
   - The preconditions for ADL training is inner motivation for learning

4) Contextual factors that influence the participants’ ability to cope:
   - The state of their lung disease
   - Family and environmental conditions
   - Personal factors

Conclusion
People with COPD experience the change of habits in performing daily life activities, in a process. ADL-training, in which the body is used as the primary source of knowledge, can be useful if the patient is in a stage of his/her health promoting process where he or she is motivated for changing and learning new habits in daily life.

References