

Do discharge plans for patients undergoing rehabilitation meet their requirements? An observational study.

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Background: Discharge planning is a vital component of rehabilitation and necessitates the development of an individualised plan for each patient that meets their ongoing needs. The primary aim of this study was to investigate whether discharge plans met the requirements of patients who were being discharged home from a rehabilitation centre. Secondary aims were to identify factors influencing the success of discharge planning and whether the perceptions of participants and their significant other were in agreement regarding the success of discharge planning.

Methods: An observational study involving 40 patients from two rehabilitation centres was undertaken. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted to determine participants' satisfaction with their discharge plans: one pre-discharge and the other 1-2 months post-discharge. Most analyses were descriptive in nature.

Results: The mean age of participants was 69 years and stroke was the most frequent primary diagnosis. Pre-discharge, virtually all participants ($\geq 95\%$) reported that they had been involved in the discharge planning process and thought these plans would meet their requirements. Post-discharge, the majority of participants reported that most of the items listed on their discharge plans had been provided, were required and met their requirements. The highest rate for non-delivery of items on the discharge plans was for domestic services, where five of 14 participants (36%) who should have received cleaning services did not. A minority of participants (18%) reported requirements that had not been listed in their discharge plans, suggesting that the discharge plans were, overall, comprehensive and appropriate. The success of discharge planning did not appear to be influenced by factors such as age, primary diagnosis and functional status. A high level of agreement was seen between participants and their significant other regarding the success of discharge planning.

Discussion: For this sample of patients, discharge plans were appropriate, delivered and met their requirements.