Undergraduate Students' Education: Physical Activity after Spinal Cord Injury

Purpose

To determine how much emphasis is placed on teaching Canadian undergraduate students about physical activity and exercise after spinal cord injury.

Summary

- 83 Canadian universities were contacted to obtain course descriptions from instructors and/or administrative assistants and to complete a survey outlining course content
- 74 courses discussed SCI and only 47 (64%) covered topics relating to physical activity and exercise
- The 47 courses that discussed physical activity and exercise after an SCI were concentrated in 22 Canadian universities
- Only 31 courses (66%) that discussed physical activity and exercise after SCI were mandatory to obtain a degree

Possible Applications

- There is potential to reach a large number of future healthcare professionals with information regarding the importance of physical activity and exercise after a SCI
- It is recommended that such information be targeted and mandatory for degree credit in areas such as Kinesiology, Physical Education, Rehabilitation Sciences, Nursing, and Recreation and Leisure Studies

Research Abstract

Knowledge mobilization regarding activity and exercise after spinal cord injury: A Canadian undergraduate curriculum scan

***Purpose*:** The purpose of this study was to conduct a curriculum scan of Canadian undergraduate university programs to determine the relative emphasis placed on the activity and exercise after spinal cord injury (SCI), in the context of physical disability studies.
***Method*:** Eighty-three Canadian Universities were evaluated for courses discussing: (i) general information about SCI, (ii) physical activity and exercise after SCI, (iii) general information about other physical disabilities and (iv) physical activity and exercise for such disabilities. Online course calendars (2009) were scanned, and their accuracy was verified by instructors or administrative assistants.
***Results*:** The curriculum scan revealed 113 courses that discuss physical disability. Seventy-four of these courses cover information regarding SCI, 47 of which include

content relating to activity and exercise. In comparison, 104 courses discuss other physical disabilities, 76 of which cover material related to activity and exercise. Further, the 47 courses that cover activity and exercise after SCI are only offered in 22 Canadian Universities, and only 31 are mandatory for a degree.
***Conclusions*:** A substantial number of future healthcare professionals lack exposure to material regarding activity and exercise after SCI during their undergraduate education. This curricular oversight likely contributes to ineffective exercise strategies and the relative inactivity of the SCI population.

Richard-Greenblatt M, Martin Ginis KA, Leber B, Ditor DS. (2012). Knowledge mobilization regarding activity and exercise after spinal cord injury: A Canadian undergraduate curriculum scan. ***Disability and Rehabilitation. 34(17),*** **1456-1460.**