



PHYSIOTHERAPY: CASE STUDIES IN EFFICACY

Judi Bierman, Physiotherapy: Case Studies in Efficacy

Physical therapists, as all members of the health care team are being challenged to provide best practice in the context of "evidence based practice".

The difficulties however in proving the efficacy and in effectiveness of our intervention are numerous and range from the heterogeneous nature of the population we serve, the heterogeneous nature of physical therapists, the role each therapist plays within the entire health, education, and family team, and the decision of what outcomes will be listed and how each will be tested. In this presentation, the effectiveness of physical therapy will be reviewed in a series of case study reports. The ICF model will be used and the emphasis of outcomes will be on improving functional abilities and contributing to fuller participation in family, school, and community life based on the goals established by the individuals and their families.

The impact of therapy on several clients will be reviewed from each person's infancy to young adulthood as environmental and medical needs change. The role of the physical therapist will change as the emergence of other associated diagnoses, the emergency of secondary impairments related to the primary diagnosis, other medical interventions, (medications, surgeries, etc) and shifts in family life or environmental demands.

The first case report will include a more in-depth review of one individual, David, a child with multiple medical problems who was followed in physical therapy from 2 days of age until the present age of 18 years. The study will stress the need to modify the intervention as medical needs change, as options for intervention change and as participation requirements shift.

The next two studies will compare and contrast treatment effectiveness in two young men (Joshua and Elijah) with very similar diagnoses and yet very different interventions and outcomes based on differences in family dynamics and overall health care choices. The need of the physical therapist to fit into multiple teams and support families from diverse backgrounds and with equally diverse value systems will be stressed.

Finally, lessons learned from the previous studies will be applied to begin developing a plan of care for twin boys, Brandon and Blake, who are now four years old.