

Rehabilitating individuals with spinocerebellar ataxia: Experiences from impairment-based rehabilitation through multidisciplinary care approach

ABSTRACT

Spinocerebellar ataxia (SCA) is a rare neurodegenerative disease with progressive course and poor expected outcomes. Therefore, rehabilitation remains the principal form of management especially in advanced disease. Impairment-based rehabilitation through multidisciplinary care approach has proven benefits for functional improvement in individuals with advancing SCA. This concept is based on comprehensive assessments of individualised impairments and functional limitations while exploring contributing environmental and personal factors affecting the person as a whole. From this assessment, individualised rehabilitation goals can be formulated through a multidisciplinary care approach. Neurologists, rehabilitation physicians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech and language pathologists are key individuals involved in the multidisciplinary care for individuals with SCA rehabilitation. Two cases of individuals at different stages of SCA are presented to highlight the rehabilitation approach in providing focused interventions based on individualised impairments through multidisciplinary care. These cases emphasise the importance of understanding the needs of each individuals with SCA so that the rehabilitative therapies prescribed can be tailored to the functional achievements desired.