

Effects of the Transitional Care Program on Functional Ability and Quality of Life of Stroke Survivors

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ABSTRACT

Stroke causes deterioration of functional ability and a decreased quality of life in stroke survivors. The cares provided to stroke survivors during the transitional period are substantial improvements in functional ability and quality of life. This study was an experimental pretest-posttest control group design, aimed at determining whether the Transitional Care Program affected functional ability and quality of life in first stroke survivors. Sixty-seven stroke survivors from Hat Yai and Songkhla hospitals were randomly assigned into the Transitional Care Program intervention (n=33) and usual care (n=34). The Transitional Care Program was conducted in the hospital and extended to 4 weeks post discharge through 2 home visits and 2 telephone visits at stroke survivors' homes. Data were collected within 24-48 hours after admittance and 12 weeks post discharge. Functional ability and quality of life were measured using the Modified Barthel Index and Ferrans and Powers' Quality of Life Index Stroke Version. All instruments were tested for reliability and reported at .87. The effectiveness of the program was tested using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test, t-test and ANCOVA based on the distribution. The study revealed that the functional ability and quality of life of stroke survivors in the experimental group were significantly better than those in the control group ($p < .01$ and $.05$, respectively). These results suggest that the Transitional Care Program decreases disability and increases quality of life of stroke survivors and should be included as part of stroke care.

Key words: Transitional Care Program, Functional ability, Quality of life, Stroke survivors

INTRODUCTION

Stroke is still a serious health problem in Thailand similar to other countries. It is not only the third-leading cause of death (Health Information Unit, 2006),