Abstract

Development of a model of participation in community-based, discretionary activities by people who use wheelchairs

by

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This cross-sectional research analyzed an existing data set of 302 wheelchair users to identify the psychosocial predictors of participation in community-based, discretionary activities. Two defining elements of participation were studied: the extent of participation and satisfaction with participation. Descriptive analyses of the participants’ demographic information and portions of four assessments were completed first. Regression analyses were then used to systematically eliminate potential covariates until the significant psychosocial covariates of the extent of and satisfaction with participation were identified. Perceived control over one’s life and perceived reintegration to social function were found to predict the extent of participation. Perceived control also predicted satisfaction with participation as did the participant’s general mental health. Additionally, because the extent of participation predicted satisfaction, the perception of reintegration also predicted satisfaction through the extent of participation. Limitations of this study include those inherent in using an existing data set as well as not representing wheelchair users from sufficiently diverse racial, ethnic, socio-economic or geographic backgrounds.
These important findings indicate a need for future study to identify how psychosocial function is addressed during the physical rehabilitation process and may act as an impetus for modifications in the education of professionals who work with people with disabilities.