

ABSTRACT

Background: The prevalence of polytrauma is increasing globally and in South Africa, resulting in a contribution to the already increasing rate of disability. Early physiotherapy intervention in the acute care setting has been shown to reduce the risk of complications and facilitate functional recovery of patients sustaining polytrauma injuries. There is minimal evidence exploring the patient's perceptions of their health care service provision following polytrauma injury in an acute care and outpatient setting.

Objectives: To explore patient's perceptions of their recovery of physical function after polytrauma.

Method: A qualitative single case study design comprising of nine semi structured interviews with key informants, selected through purposive and snowball sampling, was employed in a private trauma facility in Johannesburg. Inductive data analysis was conducted utilising MAXQDA to derive codes and themes from the interview transcripts.

Results: Major themes which arose reflected barriers and facilitators to the patient's perceptions of their recovery of physical function amongst patients sustaining polytrauma injuries. Several themes arose, namely, level of satisfaction with care, post-discharge rehabilitation, mental health status and mental resilience, level of disability, pain and physical function, as well as support structures.

Conclusion: Factors influencing patient's perceptions of their recovery of physical function following polytrauma injury are multifactorial. Most noteworthy is that interpersonal relationships significantly influence patient's perception of care.

Clinical implications: This study may inform clinical practice in the management of patients sustaining polytrauma injuries, by addressing barriers and promoting facilitators identified. The study may also be used to inform policy related to patient management following polytrauma injury.