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Jennie Q Lou

Nova Southeastern University, USA

Rehabilitation and wellness approaches for people living with multiple sclerosis

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) affects each affected person uniquely with an unpredictable course. This poses challenges to healthcare professionals in understanding the rehabilitation and wellness needs for the MS population. This three-phased study demonstrated the process of (1) a needs assessment to determine the rehabilitation and wellness needs of people with MS; (2) the development and implementation of an innovative wellness program based on the outcomes of the needs assessment and (3) the assessment of the effectiveness of the wellness program on the general health and well-being and quality of life in MS population. A qualitative research design was utilized for the need's assessment. Knowledge obtained from the need's assessment was applied to conceptualize and design of the rehabilitation and wellness intervention program. A randomized controlled trial was conducted to compare the impact of the wellness program to a traditional rehabilitation (as gold standard), and to a social activity program (as placebo). Outcomes data were collected at the pre-intervention, immediate post-intervention, and 1, 3 and 12 months post-intervention. A Multivariate Analysis Variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The results revealed that the self-reflections of people with MS enhanced the understanding of their illness experiences and rehabilitation and wellness needs; from the randomized controlled trial, the Wellness Group demonstrated a statistically significant increase in the mental composite scores of the SF-36 ($p=0.032$). This study suggests the long-term effectiveness of a wellness approach in improving coping skills and quality of life for people living with MS. Multiple-site study will provide more insight towards the wellness approach.

Biography

Jennie Q Lou has studied medicine, neuroscience and rehabilitation science at School of Medicine in China and McMaster University in Canada. She is the Professor of Medicine and the Assistant of Medical Education and Innovation in Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine, Nova Southeastern University. She has published many articles in reputed journals and has been serving as an editorial board member of *repute*.