

TREATMENT OF A PATIENT WITH IDIOPATHIC TRANSVERSE MYELITIS USING EXERCISE, GAIT SPEED AND FUNCTIONAL INDEPENDENCE MEASURE (FIM)

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Compliance Statement: Prior to including the patient in the case study, the patient was informed of the researchers intentions and consent was obtained. The case study guidelines and inclusion criteria were explained to the patient and a consent form was provided and signed by the patient.

Abstract (Limited to 300 Words): Background/purpose: Transverse myelitis and the benefits of physical therapy have been studied independently, but the evidence supporting specific interventions is mixed and/or not explicitly stated in the literature. The purpose of this case report is to provide support and evidence for improved independence, functional mobility and quality of life following physical therapy interventions focused on exercise, improving ambulation distance/speed and increasing activity tolerance for a patient with idiopathic transverse myelitis.

Case description: The patient discussed in this case report is a 67 year old healthy Caucasian, single female who developed idiopathic C6-C7 transverse myelitis. The patient presented to a local emergency room with complaints of chest pain, shortness of breath and muscle weakness, which further developed into numbness/weakness in her right upper extremity and bilateral lower extremities. While in the hospital, the patient developed acute colitis of the transverse and descending colon, bilateral deep vein thrombosis (DVTs), and an atonic bladder that required her to stay in facilities for four months prior to starting an intensive therapy on an inpatient rehabilitation unit. The patient's examination revealed significant bilateral upper/lower extremity weakness, impaired balance, decreased independence with functional mobility and impaired activity tolerance. Interventions focused on bed mobility/transfer/gait/stair/wheelchair training, strengthening/ROM, balance, coordination, establishing a home exercise program and patient/family education. The intensity and duration of the interventions increased as the patient made progress and displayed improvements in function.

Outcomes: To track the patient's progress throughout her stay on the inpatient rehab unit, the following outcome measures/assessments were used: strength (manual muscle testing), Functional Independence Measure (FIM) and the five meter walk test.

Conclusions: The results following the implemented interventions suggest that significant gains can be achieved following an intense course of physical therapy intervention in a patient with idiopathic transverse myelitis that addresses a patient's physical limitations and functional mobility.