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Review

Burn patients' return to daily activities and participation as defined by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health: A systematic review

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ABSTRACT

The World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) is a universal classification system of health and health-related domains. The ICF has been successfully applied to a wide range of health conditions and diseases; however, its application in the field of burn recovery has been minimal.

This systematic review uses the domains of the ICF component 'activities and participation' to explore: (1) the extent to which return to daily activities and community participation after burn has been examined in the pediatric population, (2) the most common assessments used to determine activity and participation outcomes, and (3) what activity and participation areas are most affected in the pediatric burn population after discharge from acute care. Results determined that it is difficult to draw overarching conclusions in the area of return to 'activities and participation' for children with burn based on the paucity of current evidence. Of the studies conducted, few examined the same subtopics or used similar measurements. This suggests a need for more robust studies in this area in order to inform and improve burn rehabilitation practices to meet the potential needs of burn patients beyond an acute care setting.

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1. Introduction

Historically, most burn research has focused on acute care outcomes and the efficacy of acute care protocols and procedures because survival in severely burned patients has been very low [1,2]. The success of this research and improvements in clinical care have led to a rapid increase in burn survival rates over the past few decades. As a result, the burn research community has begun to shift its focus from survival to issues of morbidity, function, and the psychosocial wellbeing of burn survivors [3–6]. Burn survivors represent a complex population, presenting with deficits that impact numerous aspects of life including aesthetic appearance, relationships, psychological and emotional health, physical functioning, and social interaction [1]. This systematic review uses the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health's (ICF) activities and participation (A&P) component to help define our current understanding of pediatric patients' return to daily A&P after discharge from acute burn care.

1.1. The International Classification of Functioning (ICF)

In 2001 the World Health Organization (WHO) endorsed the ICF and followed with the Children and Youth version (ICF-CY) in 2007 [7]. Developed through an international collaborative effort spearheaded by the WHO, the ICF is an integrative framework based on a model of functioning and disability containing five main components: body functions, body structures, activities and participation, environmental factors, and personal factors. Each component contains between five and nine chapters. The chapters are further broken down into a total of 1424 categories. Fig. 1 below demonstrates the format

of the ICF framework and highlights the A&P chapters which are the focus of this review.

1.2. ICF breakdown

A vast number of ICF validity studies have been conducted worldwide from an array of professional perspectives [7]. Taken together, the ICF categories have been found to be both exhaustive and precise, which suggests that the framework encompasses the entirety of the human experience and provides a unified and standardized language that can be used worldwide to describe and classify health and health-related domains [7].

This review used the ICF-CY A&P chapters and categories as a framework to systematically explore (1) the extent to which return to daily activities and community participation after burn has been examined in the pediatric population, (2) the most common assessments used to determine A&P outcomes, and (3) what A&P areas are most affected in the pediatric burn population after discharge from acute care. The ICF A&P topics include the full range of life areas: learning and applying knowledge, general tasks and demands, communication, mobility, self-care, domestic life, interpersonal interactions and relationships, major life areas, community, social and civil life [8].

1.3. Determining the characteristics of activities and participation

The A&P component is strictly and precisely defined by the ICF. "Activity is the execution of a task or action by an individual" [8]. "Participation is involvement in a life situation" [8]. This review includes those studies with outcomes that are derivatives of one or more of the nine A&P chapter topics.

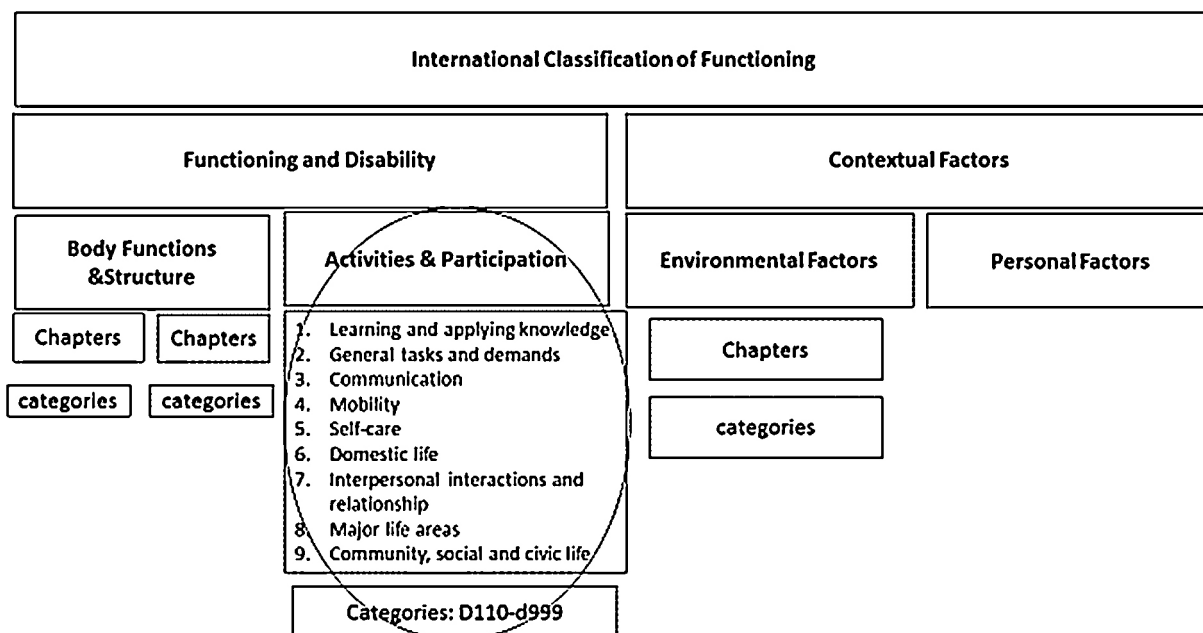


Fig. 1 – ICF framework. Activities and participation chapters are listed.

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