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Role of Orthoptists in Stroke Rehabilitation

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Introduction

Visual impairment is a deficit of visual function, and after stroke, includes gaze palsies, visual field defects, diplopia, reduced vision, eye movement disorders and cortical blindness. Visual rehabilitation has a beneficial effect on the prognosis and rehabilitation of stroke patients. In view of present health care system, stroke patients may not be receiving optimal rehabilitation as a result of a lack of proper visual assessment after stroke. Visual rehabilitation service may help to fill the service gap. Orthoptists are one of the allied health professions within the field of Ophthalmology. They specialize in assessment of visual function, monitor visual development and assess visual fields. They also assess, diagnose and treat ocular muscle defects. Therefore, Orthoptists could play an important role in stroke rehabilitation.

Objectives

To provide a broad overview of literature relating to visual problems in stroke patients, looking particularly at the role of Orthoptists in rehabilitation service.

Methodology

The online database PubMed was searched for literature relating to visual and ocular problems in stroke. The resulting abstracts and articles were then reviewed to express clinically relevant information. Findings are summarized and discussed.

Result

Visual problems in stroke are associated with problems with activities of daily living, falls and rehabilitation. Visual problems can be corrected or improved with intervention. There may be a role for formal screening for visual problems in stroke patients in a rehabilitation setting. The Orthoptist has an important role to play in stroke rehabilitation, and should be involved in the stroke multidisciplinary team.