

CP-All About Me: Talking to children with cerebral palsy about planning physiotherapy.

Objectives

This study aimed to identify the ideas and preferences of children with cerebral palsy (CP) for planning physiotherapy, including their perceptions of the F-word framework (Rosenbaum P, Gorter JW 2011).

Methods

Ethical approvals were granted from the HRA (IRAS 311409) and local R&D departments. Qualitative research was undertaken using semi-structured interviews with children attending Great Ormond Street botulinum toxin service.

The initial interview format was devised in collaboration with young people with CP and their parents. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and anonymised. Reflexive analysis of data was used to identify themes, within a framework using the F-words (Braun and Clark 2012).

Results:

Five children participated, aged 8-12 years, four girls, one boy. There were GMFCS levels I, II and IV. Interviews employed creative methods and strategies to 'depersonalise' discussion (Allard et al 2013). One interview was discontinued due to participant anxiety.

Children stated that physiotherapists should be nice: "friendly, not too professional".

Thematic analysis identified the following understanding/ideas:

- 'Fitness' – strengthening exercises, being challenged physically.
- 'Function' – activities of daily living, mobility, hobbies. Using equipment for independence.
- 'Friends' - Social connection. Being accepted, sharing physical activity with friends, having friends with similar life experiences.
- 'Family' – value of family involvement and encouragement
- 'Fun' - distraction from painful intervention, games to make sessions enjoyable. Signposting to fun accessible activities outside treatment.
- 'Future' - developing independence, physiotherapy adapting to change, supporting aspirations.

Conclusions:

Participants had their own ideas of what the F-words might represent, which fit well with the model's ethos. Its effective use in community practice can be strengthened by understanding how children with CP perceive the model and which factors they feel should be included.

Insight gained into interviewing will be used to develop resources to hear from more children including those who have communication difficulties or are learning disabled.

Word count 300 (without references and titles).