

## **Title**

### **“It’s like pushing an elephant up the stairs”: Perspectives on assessment of needs in cancer rehabilitation**

#### *Background*

Systematic assessment of rehabilitation needs is prerequisite for sufficient rehabilitation. Patients are often uncertain as to express and address their rehabilitation needs and little is known on the subject. All patients are according to national policies entitled to an assessment of their needs at both hospitals at the time of diagnosis and in the municipalities however, a significant amount of patients do not receive an assessment and are not referred to rehabilitation.

#### *Aim*

To analyze and describe healthcare professionals’ experiences and perspectives on the process of assessment of needs for cancer rehabilitation.

#### *Methodology and theoretical frame*

The study was designed as a qualitative 5 month ethnographic field study in two hematological wards and two municipality rehabilitation programs. Symbolic Interactionism was the theoretical framework and Interpretive Description the methodology. The participants were 41 healthcare professionals. Data consisted of participant observations and semi-structured individual and focus group interviews.

#### *Findings and conclusions*

An overall finding was a prominent missing link in the collaboration between the hospital and the health centers in the municipalities. The analysis revealed how the healthcare professionals’ at hospitals and in the municipalities represented two very different perspectives on collaboration and the process of assessment of needs. Possible explanations for this missing link are reflected in six categorical themes. Three themes represent the explanations given by the hospital healthcare professionals as to why hospitals give low priority to rehabilitation; Biomedical paradigm, The gatekeeping Nature and Area of Responsibility.

Further three themes represent reasons as to why municipalities prioritize rehabilitation needs; Biopsychosocial Paradigme, Shared Goal and Cooperation as Key.

In general lack of needs assessments related to cancer rehabilitation is a concern calling for at much more systematically approach to ensure patients rehabilitation but also to reduce inequity within cancer rehabilitation. The healthcare professionals’ perception of the complexities in collaboration across sectors (and paradigms) needs to be addressed to ensure identification of possible rehabilitation needs among patients underpinned as being a shared task among sectors.

#### *Practice implications*

The findings are relevant to consider while making the practice recommendations for planning and executing needs assessment in relation to cancer rehabilitation.

#### *Keywords*

Rehabilitation, Cancer, Needs assessment, Cooperation

## *References*

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## ***Ønske om Mundtlig præsentation***

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