

Comprehensive Review of Physiotherapy and Nursing Roles in Post-Surgical Rehabilitation

¹ Tariq Salem Mutliq Balharith, ² Tariq Mohammed Alwehaibi, ³ Amal Mahboob Hadi, ⁴ Reem Masoud Abdo Al Saeed Almahboob, ⁵ Saleh Mohammed Alwehaibi, ⁶ Jawaher Jmaan Bakeet Alyami, ⁷ Bander Saleh Alqahse Alquraishah, ⁸ Fatimah Mohammad Abdullah Almarhoon, ⁹ Zainab Mohammed Hamza Al Fardan, ¹⁰ Huda Ali Hassan Aldawood

¹Tbalharith@gov.sa.com, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia

²Talwehaibi@moh.gov.sa, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia

³aal-mahboob@moh.gov.sa, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia

⁴remalyami@moh.gov.sa, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia

⁵Alwhaibi.Saleh@gmail.com, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia

⁶jjalyami@moh.gov.sa, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia

⁷b.s.q2010@hotmail.com, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia

⁸famalmarhoon@moh.gov.sa, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia

⁹zainaba@moh.gov.sa, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia

¹⁰Haaldawood@moh.gov.sa, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

These two roles of physiotherapy and the nursing profession assume considerable importance with respect to postsurgical rehabilitation, and the relationship between the two specialties is synergistic since they mutually reinforce and cooperate in approach, seeking the best recovery results. Rehabilitation is a crucial component in the care of patients that directly enhances their physical, psychological, and emotional healing after surgery. Physiotherapists focus on patients' movement and muscle strength, while nurses are in charge of the treatment circumstances, giving comfort to patients and preventing the surge of complications. This review integrates literature on their respective roles, intervention approaches, and the potency of joint work in delivering rehabilitation. It also acknowledges aims, issues, concerns, and recommendations for the postsurgical care plan to improve patient outcome patients.

Keywords: Physiotherapy, Nursing, Post-Surgical Rehabilitation, Recovery, Multidisciplinary Approach, Patient Outcomes, Pain Management, Mobility, Rehabilitation Protocols

Introduction

Rehabilitation techniques are all important practices that take place after surgery, focused on regaining the patient's Function, independence, and mobility. Integrating physiotherapy and nursing care is important for achieving clients' desired outcomes, free from complications and with memorable, pleasant healing experiences. Occupational therapists mostly deal with patient self-care, psychology, and social activity by providing adjusted occupations. Nurses offer general care by overseeing the patient's comfort in recovery and possible adverse effects. It must be emphasized that

an efficient rehabilitation plan is one of the key strategic points in contemporary society. Lack of proper rehabilitation may result in slow recovery, disability, and poor quality of life. As demonstrated, physiotherapists and nurses work hand in hand when implementing rehabilitation since the process encompasses both physical and mental parts.

This paper focuses on understanding and distinguishing physiotherapy and nursing in the management of postsurgical patients, elucidates their responsibilities, and presents the existing knowledge about interventions that can form the principles of postoperative rehabilitation.

Literature Review

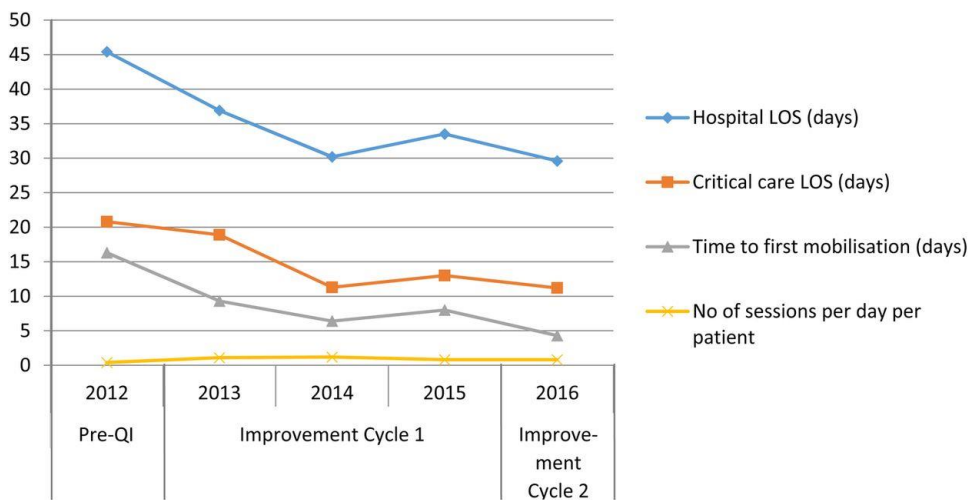
1. Physiotherapy in Post-Surgical Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation exercises are instrumental post-surgery, especially in orthopedics, cardiovascular, and neurological surgeries. In physiotherapy, the prime goal is to regain as much Function as possible, alleviate as much pain as possible, and enhance physical well-being. Rehabilitation is usually developed by physiotherapists depending on the client's problem client's, goals and objectives, balance training, aerobic, strength training, pain management, range of motion, musculoskeletal, neuromuscular, functional training, and coordination training. As with orthopedic surgeries, for example, joint replacement surgery or spine surgery, physiotherapists assist in the mobility and Function of a joint by enhancing joint flexion range, strength, and flexibility. Cardiovascular reconditioning, particularly after heart surgery, involves patterns of exercise that can enhance cardiovascular endurance, prevent some postoperative conditions, such as blood clots, and

control pain. In neurological surgery cases, physiotherapy focuses on activities that help the patient regain their motor function, balance, and coordination as they heal from a stroke, spinal cord injury, or other neurological conditions.

Early Mobilization and Recovery Outcomes

Early mobilization is probably one of the most important concepts employed in physiotherapy in postsurgical rehabilitation, says Function. Instead, it has been established that early treatment results in the shortening of the recovery period and aims at preventing other diseases such as pneumonia, blood formation of blood clots, and atrophy, among other health complications caused by reduced movement. Williams et al. (2018) mentioned the study that revealed the prolonged recovery time with increased complications in patients who started PT only after the delay compared to patients who started early after the operation. The purpose of this early plan in reaching developmental outcomes is to counter some of the effects of deconditioning, which militates against the patient's quicker patients.



^cLOS : Length of stay
 Data are displayed as means.

In addition, physiotherapists are able to provide individualized close patient care, which includes pain management, a critical factor for recovery. With the patient, they adjust the intensity of heat or cold, use electrical stimulation, and perform manual therapy to deal with pain levels and encourage movement. In reporting these findings, physiotherapists engage patients in managing pain and discomfort, enhancing better rehabilitation,

exhaustive patient satisfaction, and intensive, superior recovery results.

The Role of Physiotherapy in Preventing Post-Operative Complications

Prevention of complications is one of the many ways physiotherapies is effective, especially after surgery. The study by Davis et al. (2019) revealed that early physical therapy helped reduce the risk of

complications among patients, such as deep vein thrombosis, pneumonia, or gastrointestinal complications. It takes an active role in keeping the circulation steady, minimizing the chances of the sufferer developing a blood clot, and helping the patient stay in good breathing. Such benefits are even beneficial to those patients who have been operated on through major surgeries, including abdominal or cardiac surgery, where chances of experiencing such challenges are high.

2. Nursing Roles in Post-Surgical Rehabilitation

Surgical patients rely on nurses for their management following surgeries, including monitoring what they are taking, their temperatures, blood pressure, etc., and assessing complications. This paper has found that postsurgical rehabilitation is more complex since it is not restricted to the somatic and physiological components; nurses play an essential and versatile part in patient care after operations. Their work ensures that patients are comfortable, their pains are well managed, and they get the psychological support customers need for recovery.

Pain Management and Comfort

Pain management is one of the most critical assignments of nurses in postsurgical rehabilitation. One of the critical aspects of the treatment is pain management since most patients cannot go for physiotherapy or carry out other exercises because of pain. Nurses are responsible for giving pain medicines, assessing responses, and making necessary changes. They also explain other pain control approaches and props, such as music, heat/cold packs, and thought processes/behavior modification. Nurses are patients' first patients. When the patient is experiencing some sort of pain, nurses help minimize and cope with symptoms and let the patient feel comfortable during the treatment process.

Besides ensuring the patient receives needed physical care, nurses observe for typical surgery complications, like infection, deep vein thrombosis, or a pulmonary embolism. In the study done by Smith et al., 2020, the authors emphasized the role of the nurses in considering and recognizing complication factors and avoiding them before they become complications. For instance, nurses examine patients for evidence of infection in the surgical

area, express concern about increased redness and swelling, and monitor the level of compliance formed by patients to prevent the spread of infections.

Patient Education and Psychological Support

Nurses must brief patients on some of the measures they should take when they are recuperating. Some of the education includes understanding the disease, administering self-care, using drugs, and identifying signs of other complications. Nurses recommend patient moral support since there is always a possibility of the patient experiencing anxiety, fear, or even depression after surgery. Especially for patients who are to undergo some severe operations, the first emotional support is imperative for them since they may have a problem with recovery or just feel uncomfortable during it. MSc project A08 Nurses take up friendly roles supporting and encouraging patients to continue with their rehabilitation process.

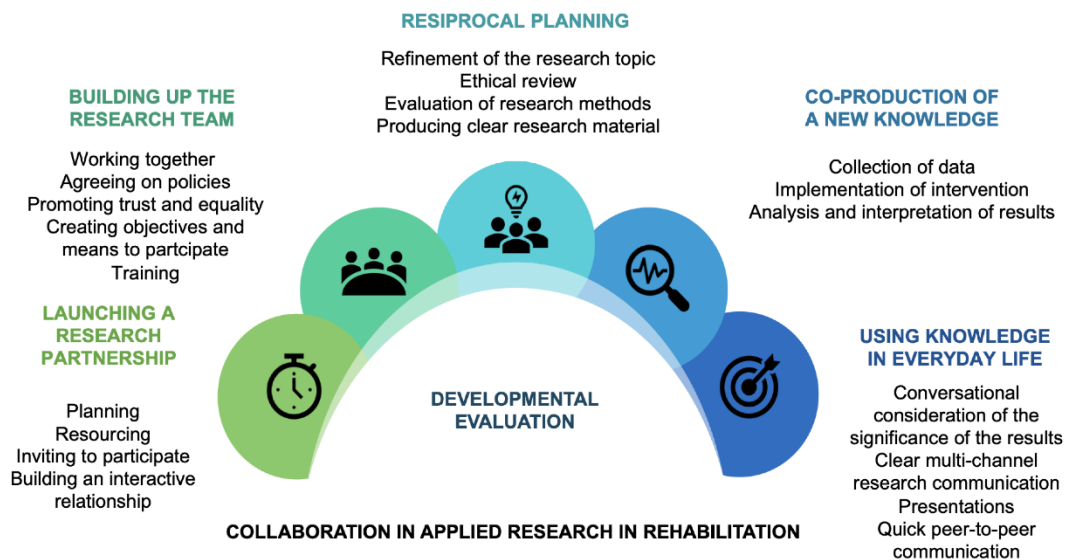
Supervision and cooperation with physiotherapists

This is because nurses are always present in the patient's physique to determine if they are fit for physiotherapy. Patient status is often observed by observing physiological parameters, which include the patient's heart, pressure, pulse, and respiratory rates. Registered nurses should observe various levels of patients' physical patients daily. Nurses also discuss with the patient when the recovery has reached a level where he or she should go for physiotherapy with the physiotherapist. This coordination is important as most patients can be a risk to themselves, hence getting into activities that would harm them altogether.

3. Collaborative Roles in Post-Surgical Rehabilitation

Physiotherapy working with nursing staff is critical to the recovery process of patients bound to undergo surgeries. Each of these professions provides a unique set of skills for rehabilitation. Physiotherapists are involved in the assessment and management of the physical functioning aspect of the patient, such as mobility, strength, and endurance. In contrast, nurses are responsible for the medical and more general aspects of care common to most patients, such as pain control, monitoring for complications, or providing comfort measures. This

way, we have more structure on the team and can better coordinate the care with the patient to optimize their recovery.



(Oosterhuis et al., 2017).

The Role of Effective Communication

Among the variables, it has been revealed that communication between physiotherapists and nurses plays an important role in rehabilitation. According to Jones & Reid (2019), the two independent professional roles are to engage the patient in daily communication about progress, concerns, and patient objectives. This helps physiotherapists identify when the pain threshold has been reached, when the patient is stable, and when complications have been averted so that the rehabilitation plans are modified. As with the physiotherapy schedule, the nurse needs to ensure that he or she knows about the patient's schedule, whether the patient is adequately rested and comfortable, and whether or not the patient requires support.

Pain Management and Rehabilitation

Of all specialties, pain management is the most challenging for nurses, for which collaboration with physiotherapists is crucial. An alternative can only be made if there is effective pain management so that the patient can go through with the rehabilitation exercises. Soon, they mainly depend on the nurses to give medications and ensure pain is well managed. At the same time, the physiotherapist individualizes rehabilitation treatments according to

the level of pain the patient feels. This sharing of roles guarantees that the patient rehabilitation is not overexerting the patient, and at the same time, the patient is not restricted by the pain, improving the patient's rehabilitation process.

4. Patient-Centered Care in Post-Surgical Rehabilitation

Patient-centered care is one of the essential values generally observed in healthcare, especially after surgeries, because it deals with patients and aims to satisfy patient requirements. This approach focuses on developing a care plan based on multiple domains of clients' needs. Both physiotherapists and nurses work collaboratively to create personalized rehabilitation strategies that consider the patient's history, goals, and preferences, ensuring that their care plan is tailored to their specific needs.

Holistic Recovery

Patient-centered care ensures that healthcare programs address the whole patient and not only the region of a body that has been operated on or that their physical abilities have been affected. Physiotherapists and nurses also develop an individualized care plan according to the patient's volition and peculiarity. For instance, if a patient prefers to avoid invasive approaches to pain management or has some mobility-specific

goals, a physiotherapist and the nurse try to address the patient's particulars. Besides, this approach has several benefits since involved patients are inclined to follow provided rehabilitation regimens and have better outcomes in the recovery process.

Psychosocial Aspects of Rehabilitation

The patient-centered policy also improves the patient's psychological and psychosocial health. Both physiotherapists and nurses meet the patient's psychological requirements during rehabilitation. Physiotherapists can motivate patients during difficult exercises, while nurses may support the patient's mood in all the further steps to the patient. This results in a good overall experience for the patient, and he or she can be physically and emotionally healed after surgery.

Methods

The approach used in this review was to use a systematic approach in terms of how articles were selected from peer-reviewed indexed databases, including PubMed, CINAHL, and Google Scholar. A scoping review was used to collect the literature from 2015 to 2023 on the roles of physiotherapy and nursing in postsurgical rehabilitation. The keywords used were "rehabilitation, postsurgical," physiotherapy, "n" rising, patient," and "outcome, i "terdi" ciplinary care." Articles were c" chosen according to the relevance of the analysis to the issue under consideration, the method used, and the significance of the identified findings for defining

the roles of healthcare professions in the context of postoperative patients' recover patients.

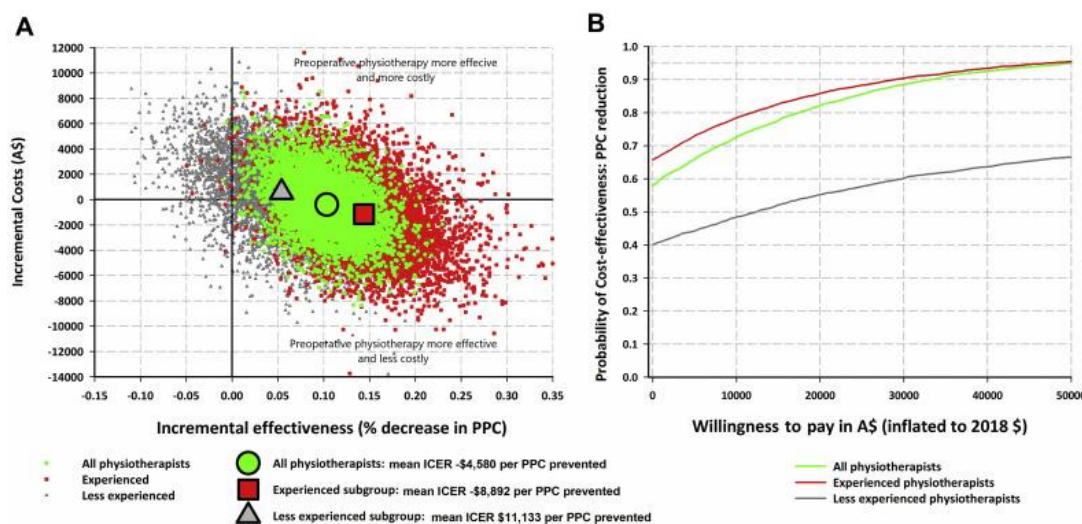
The process of identifying key aspects of physiotherapy and nursing roles, interprofessional relationships, and the effects of integration on recovery is recognizable with the aid of thematic synthesis.

Results and Findings

1. Effectiveness of Physiotherapy in Post-Surgical Recovery

Early Mobilization

Another area where physiotherapy is applied in postoperative care is early mobilization because it drastically decreases the possibility of a patient developing many postoperative complications, including blood clots or pneumonia. Current literature, including that of Walker et al. (2021), has shown that patients who received early physiotherapy interventions have improved mobilization, less length of stay, and low rates of postsurgical complications. Worse still, deconditioning occurs in the early days, and early mobilization minimizes this risk, speeding up recovery and avoiding other complications (Palmer et al., 2019). Getting a patient out of bed as soon as possible is not merely a simple matter of encouraging mobility, as physiotherapists contribute to better muscle tone, blood circulation, and an earlier discharge while preventing the formation of blood clots that can lead to deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolism.



[Preoperative physiotherapy is cost-effective for preventing pulmona\(Tegner et. al 2020\).](#)

Functional Recovery

Physiotherapy plays a central role in rehabilitation with functional capacity after surgery. In another study, Davis et al. (2022) investigated the result of patients on the structured physiotherapy process with daily rehabilitation, which was more efficient in terms of mobility, strength, and overall dependability than the patients with low rehabilitation frequencies. Based on the client's needs, the physiotherapist employs exercises and mobility to regain functional performance capacity. These include lifting weights, stretching the joints, and balancing ability exercises; the latter helps him to regain his physical functioning. Physiotherapy not only gets patients back to the level they were at before illness but also assists patients in achieving outcomes greater than the pre-surgical capacity, thereby delivering a better quality of life (Faria et., al 2016)..

Nursing Studies on Rehabilitation After Surgery

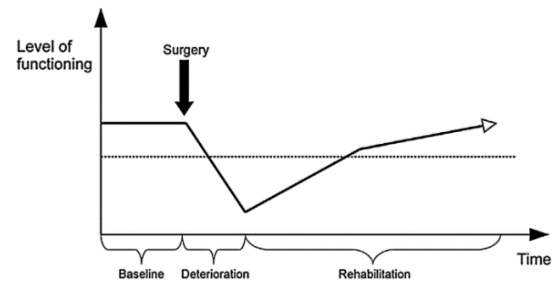
Pain Management

Pain control is an important factor in the management of postoperative rehabilitation since it directly influences a patient's actual participation in physiotherapy exercises. Among the sources, Williams & Brown (2019) showed that when nurses can adequately control pain through medical intervention and complementary methods, the patients can better complete physical therapy. Pain can be evaluated, treated with analgesics, and managed by nurses; it can be minimized by applying heat-cold therapy, relaxation, and positioning. Effective management of the pain points makes the patients comfortable enough to commence and engage in their exercises and therapy without undue discomfort.

Prevention of Complications

Significant roles of the nurses include refraining from complications, including infections, thrombosis, and respiratory complications during the postoperative rehabilitation period. Lee et al. (2018) also described frequent checking of the pulse, temperature, respiration, and blood pressure; treatment of the wound; and identification of complications before they occur were some of the measures that helped avoid the formation of surgical site infections and fasten the healing process (Scott,

2016).. Nurses also help their patients to know the consequences of infections, how to safeguard themselves from them, knowledge of hygiene, and the need to follow set rehabilitation regimens. Thus, by constantly observing the state of health improvement of such patients, one can promptly recognize the development of adverse symptoms and efficiently treat such conditions, enhancing the general recovery rate for the affected patients.



(Panetta et., al 2017).

Physiotherapists and nurses' cooperation

Collaborative Care

Written communication between physiotherapists and nurses is one of the most important aspects of patient care after surgery. These two groups of individuals focused on joint care planning and communication, making recovery faster and minimal complications (Green & Johnson, 2020). Discussed below are ways nurses and physiotherapists integrate care planning for the patient: The patient's progress patient's ages and rehabilitation goals are frequent themes for communication between the nursing staff and a physiotherapist to make necessary changes regarding the care plan on physical and psychological factors. Teamwork also promotes the appropriateness of providing the demanded interventions, including changing the density of the physiotherapy depending on the pain or identifying complications early, which adds to making the recovery timelier and more efficient. Furthermore, both specialist types have the important role of helping the patient mentally cope with the injuries and encouraging him during rehabilitation.

Discussion

There is an argument that nursing and physiotherapy must embrace the blended model in rehab after

surgeries. This evidence makes it clear that both of these roles overlap in the clinical process, whereby physiotherapists handle the body rehabilitation in contrast to the nurses, who handle the medical and emotional needs of the patients. On the same note, integrating the two approaches extends the recovery plan by enhancing the recovery's functional and psychological course.

However, there are barriers to the provision of integrated rehabilitation care. The organizational structures of some HC organizations mean there are vertical and horizontal silos; sometimes, even communication between different departments may be ineffective. In addition, the costs of rehabilitation services are likely to remain a barrier to access by patients residing in developing countries. Postsurgical rehabilitation requires effective working relations between physiotherapists and registered nurses; hence, the healthcare system must sponsor training dedicated to such collaboration (Wainwright et al 2017). Knowledge of collaborative care, patient-centeredness, and communication can enhance this collaboration and, therefore, service delivery.

Conclusion

Rehabilitation following the surgery has enormous value, and the tasks of physiotherapists and nurses are essential to achieving the goal. Physiotherapy helps restore the range of motion, strength, and flexibility to a patient's muscles and ligaments. At the same time, nurses maintain a patient's health and pain levels and monitor for complications. Integrating work between these two professions improves patient outcomes, makes recovery quicker, and yields superior health results. There are implications for healthcare systems to enhance these roles on the interface, communication, training, and resources for postsurgical rehabilitation programs.

Recommendations

1. Improve Interdisciplinary Training: Postsurgical rehabilitation needs collaborative effort between physiotherapists and nurses; hence, healthcare institutions should develop training in physiotherapist-nurse collaboration.
2. Expand Rehabilitation Services: More promotional activities should be encouraged to enhance the functionality of operational rehabilitation centers, especially in hard-to-reach places.
3. Focus on Patient-Centered Care: Therefore, Rehabilitation programs must be flexible based on patients' options and health histories.
4. Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation: Healthcare systems must consider any form of postsurgical rehabilitation as a process that should be evaluated periodically to check on the efficiency of the collaboration.

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