

EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS THROUGH PERSONAL GOAL SETTING IN LONG-TERM BRAIN INJURY REHABILITATION: A TAXONOMIC ANALYSIS AND ITS IMPACT ON QUALITY OF LIFE

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Background and Aims

Long-term rehabilitation following an acquired brain injury (ABI) requires an individualized, person-centered approach that respects the needs, autonomy, and life aspirations of individuals. At Center Naprej, we implement a structured goal-setting model based on a two-level taxonomy, enabling the formulation of goals across ten key life domains, including Health, Knowledge/Work, Emotions, and Social Life. This approach fosters active user participation in the rehabilitation process, supports the creation of personalized goals, and facilitates long-term progress monitoring, thereby adjusting rehabilitation to their individual needs.

Methods

This study was conducted in two phases (2019–2024) and included 62 individuals with ABI from two units of Center Naprej. Firstly, we examined general and specific goals set by users. An internal assessment tool – the Wheel of Life – was used.

Results

Participants defined 253 general goals across ten life domains. The majority of these goals were related to the domains of Knowledge/Work (36%), Health (28%), and Emotions (8%). The users formulated 1,122 specific goals based on these goals across six rehabilitation areas. Again, the largest percentage was directed toward Health and Knowledge/Work (35% and 46%, respectively). A five-year analysis revealed that users maintain consistent goals over time, indicating long-term commitment. Furthermore, increases in their evaluations over the research period suggest measurable progress in goal attainment. In the second phase, involving 47 users, we explored the relationship between goal achievement and quality of life using the QOLIBRI questionnaire. A positive trend was found: higher levels of goal achievement were associated with higher quality of life scores ($\eta^2 = 0.083$), although the results were not statistically significant ($p = 0.058$).

Conclusion

The findings highlight the importance of long-term commitment to personal goals and the role of structured taxonomies in identifying key life domains. This contributes significantly to improved rehabilitation outcomes and enhanced quality of life for individuals after ABI.

Keywords: Rehabilitation, Goals, QoL, Taxonomy, Empowerment