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The critical need for skilled physical and occupational therapy evaluation and treatment to improve function and quality of life in patients with Charcot Marie Tooth neuropathy

Quality of life (QOL) improvement is the goal of most patients and therefore should be very high on the priority list of goals for healthcare practitioners. Every person has a different hierarchy of factors leading to improved physical function and QOL, however there are a few fundamental items reported by many, including: Independence in activities of daily living (ADL), comfortable mobility, and community access. Physical function in general, mobility, ADL, and control over one's life can all be negatively impacted by weakness, pain, joint restrictions, sensory loss, and imbalance. These symptoms and impairments along with others are often seen in patients with a diagnosis of Charcot Marie Tooth disease (CMT). They all negatively impact physical function and QOL and should be skillfully addressed by healthcare practitioners in an effort to help their patients with CMT. The purpose of this abstract is to advocate that every patient with a diagnosis of CMT undergo an evaluation and treatment (if warranted) by PT and OT to help improve physical function and QOL. Patients newly diagnosed or with long standing CMT typically see Neurologists, Orthopedists, Psychiatrists and other medical and healthcare professionals. Unfortunately, rehabilitation specialists, physical (PT) and occupational (OT) therapists, who are the experts in physical function and dysfunction, are not common (or common enough) members of the healthcare team providing regular skilled care for patients with CMT. Physical and occupational therapists use many modalities when treating their patients including therapeutic exercise and activities, neuromuscular re-education and manual therapeutic techniques to improve independence and physical function. Understanding each individual patients' medical history, complexities, personal goals, impairments, and current functional deficits, enable a skilled therapist to identify a plan of care to achieve short and long term goals and improve function and QOL.

Biography

James Nussbaum is the Clinical Director of ProHealth & Fitness, PT, PC, a rehabilitation organization offering outpatient and home based Physical and Occupational Therapy services in the New York City area. He graduated from Touro College of Health Sciences in 1999 with highest academic achievement, with a Masters in Physical Therapy, and earned a PhD in Physical Education and Exercise Science in 2001 from Cambridge State University with a focus on Pathokinesiology and Injury Prevention. In 2000, he founded ProHealth's education division, where continuing education is provided for healthcare practitioners by leaders in rehabilitation, focusing on evidence based practice.

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