



Investigating Lived Experiences and Challenges on Performance of Specific ADLs by Individuals with Chronic Stroke: A Qualitative Study

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Introduction

- Stroke often results in long-term disability and challenges in performing daily activities.¹
- Even after physical recovery through rehabilitation, many survivors continue to struggle with self-care tasks.²
- Aim: To explore the lived experiences of stroke survivors regarding barriers and facilitators to self-care, with the goal of informing rehabilitation strategies to address these challenges.

Methods

- Population:** Individuals with chronic stroke at least 6 months after onset, 18 years old and older.
- Data Collection and analysis:**
 - Individual Interviews via in-person and phone were recorded and transcribed.
 - Thematic analysis was conducted with two independent coders conducted thematic analysis.³
 - The interview script included 10 questions and prompt question were asked as needed.
 - Questions explored how stroke survivors experience and manage changes in their self-care, examining daily challenges, emotional responses, support systems, environmental and therapeutic influences, and strategies they use to regain independence.

Results

- Seven adults were included in the study (Table 1).
- Average age was 58 years, with most experiencing left-side impairment, averaging 6.5 months post stroke.
- The sample included one female participant and two black participants.

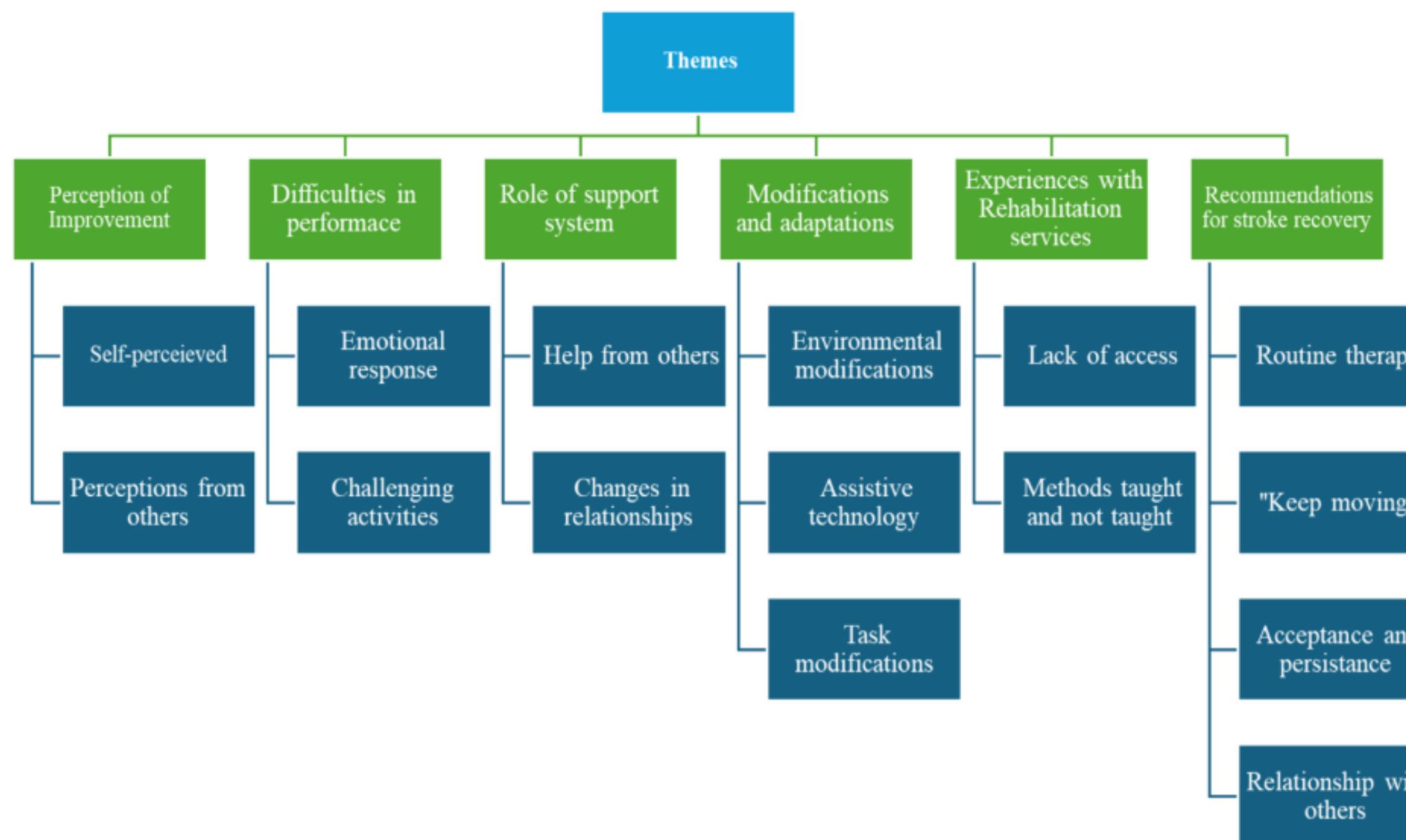
Table 1. Participants Characteristics

Participant	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Race	Time since stroke (m)	Affected side	Caregiver present?
PT- #1	59	Male	Non-Hispanic	White	75.5	L	YES
PT- #2	65	Male	Non-Hispanic	White	11.6	L	YES
PT- #3	46	Male	Non-Hispanic	Black	15.2	R	NO
PT- #4	74	Female	Non-Hispanic	White	20.3	L	NO
PT- #5	42	Male	Non-Hispanic	White	6.5	L	YES
PT- #6	54	Male	Non-Hispanic	Black	65.6	L	NO
PT- #7	68	Male	Non-Hispanic	White	143.5	L	NO

Results (cont.)

- Six themes and fifteen sub-themes were identified (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Themes and Sub-themes



- Theme 1: Perception of Improvement:** describes the participant's perspectives on their progress in self-care after stroke, leading to two sub-themes, **Self-perceived Changes and Perception from Others**, highlighting the discrepancies between personal and external views of progress.

"I felt successful putting on my own shoes." (PT 05)

"People say I'm getting better, but I don't see it" (PT 01)

- Theme 2: Difficulties in performance:** describes the difficulties participants faced in self-care performance, leading to **Emotional Response and Challenging Activities** highlighting how physical limitations and task demands shaped their frustration, effort, and adaptation during recovery.

"A lot of things take two hands to do." (PT 01)

"It's more difficult for me to do things for myself than it was before, like going to the bathroom." (PT 02)

- Theme 3: Role of Support System:** describes how social and practical support shaped recovery, leading to two sub-themes **Help from Others and Changes in Relationships**, which explains how participants adapted to new forms of assistance and changes in relational dynamics.

"My caregiver, Ms. Beverly showed me how to put my shirt on. She was the key." (PT 06)

"Sometimes I assume I'm a burden to my wife." (PT 07)

Results (cont.)

- Theme 4: Modifications and adaptations:** describes how participants modified their environments, devices, and techniques to maintain independence, leading to three sub-themes **Environmental Modifications, Assistive Technology, and Task Modifications** as key strategies for managing self-care challenges.

"We put up a bar to help me hold on getting out." (PT 04)

"I've learned to turn myself over in the bathtub and push myself up." (PT 04)

- Theme 5: Experiences with Rehabilitation Services:** describes how access to and quality of rehabilitation influenced recovery, leading to two sub-themes **Lack of Access and Methods Taught and Not Taught**, emphasizing the gaps and the impact of education on long term self-care.

"Our insurance ran out. We have no more." (PT 05)

"They taught me an easier way to put my shirt on." (PT 03)

- Theme 6: Recommendations for stroke recovery:** describes the guidance participants felt was most important for recovery, reflected in four sub-themes **Routine Therapy, "Keep Moving," Acceptance and Persistence, and Relationship with Others**, which capture the behaviors and attitudes they believed supported their ongoing improvement.

"When you go to therapy, take it seriously, it can help." (PT 03)

"Try not to be aggressive with your helper." (PT 02)

Discussion and Conclusion

- These findings can offer occupational therapy practitioners with valuable insight into the challenges individuals with chronic stroke face in performing self-care, from a lived experience perspective.
- This study can support the development of client-centered interventions that specify address psychosocial factors during stroke recovery.

References

