

# A Preliminary Report of Assistive Device Usage in the Disabled

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**Purpose:** This study reports the development of an assistive device usage survey questionnaire for disabled users and the results of a pilot test. **Methods:** The assistive device usage survey questionnaire for disabled users were developed based on literature review and expert group meetings. The validity of the questionnaire was tested by the semi-Delphi technique with 16 experts in related fields. The content of the questionnaire included 23 questions covering questions such as types of devices, process and difficulty encountered during acquiring of the device, satisfaction with the device, follow-up and professional involvement in the process. The pilot test was conducted on 148 subjects with disability sampled by convenience. The subjects were recruited in an assistive device fair and from rehabilitation wards, assistive device centers, and disability patient associations. The questionnaire was administered by face-to-face interview if possible. For subjects unable to leave home, telephone interview was administered. **Results:** The average age of the subjects was 42.9 (range 4-88) years. Seven subjects did not use any assistive device. The remaining 141 subjects used a total of 288 devices, averaging 2.04 devices per person. The average time to complete a questionnaire was 15 minutes. Wheelchairs, canes and electric wheelchairs were most commonly used in this sample of subjects. Among them, 26.2% of users received suggestions from therapists regarding the prescription of the assistive devices and 34.8% of users received instructions regarding the proper use of devices from therapists. The main problems encountered while obtaining the devices were cost (32.3%) and reimbursement process (17.7%). Chi-square test revealed that devices for daily living were significantly different from rehabilitative devices in terms of purchase process, professional involvement and custom-made proportion ( $p < 0.01$ ) Mann-Whitney U test revealed that devices for daily living were significantly different from rehabilitative devices in terms of convenience, care load reduction, and satisfaction ( $p < 0.05$ ). **Conclusions:** It is suggested that the process of reimbursement of assistive devices be redesigned to reduce the difficulty encountered by the assistive device users and establish the follow-up system to improve proper use of assistive devices. Therapists should devote more in the assistive device related services, especially in the arena of daily living assistive devices. (FJPT 2004;29(6):396-404)

**Key Words:** Assistive devices, Satisfaction, Disability, Questionnaire

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