

Usage Survey of Locomotive Assistive Devices for Long-Term Care Clients

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Purpose: To survey the current usage conditions of locomotive assistive devices (wheelchair, cane, lower extremity orthoses) for long term care clients. **Method:** A usage survey questionnaire was designed based on focus group discussion and video analysis. The Delphi method was used to verify the face and content validity. Inter-rater reliability was tested with two testers interviewing 12 subjects (9 males, 3 females, average 48.2 years). Then 29 long-term care facilities with 111 interviewers at counties composed of more than 10000 older residents assisted in the survey. A total of 468 long term care clients who were using locomotive assistive devices completed the interview. **Results:** The inter-rater reliability for the questionnaire was satisfactory (average weighted Kappa = 0.88) except a few questions regarding visual assessment of the appropriateness of the size of the wheelchair. The participating long term care clients averaged 65 years old and 67% were using wheelchairs, 47% were using canes or walkers, and 9% were using lower limb orthoses. Less than 50% of subjects have received medical opinions on selecting assistive devices or usage of the devices. Use-related injuries or accidents were not uncommon (15% in wheel chair users, 55% in orthoses users). Seven percent of wheelchair users and 41% of lower limb orthoses users were able to take public transportation or taxi independently. **Conclusion:** The clinicians should be aware of the problems revealed by this study for better care of users of assistive devices. (FJPT 2004;29(6):405-420)

Key Words: Assistive technology, Questionnaire, Wheelchair, Cane, Lower limb orthosis

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