

Date / Time: **Tuesday, Feb 5 / 09:00 - 10:15**

Session Name and Room: **Quality Of Life Issues - 1**

Room 1.05

Abstract Title: **The Use Of Focus Groups To Aid In The Development Of A Mobility Outcome Measure**

Abstract number: **75**

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Introduction

Restoration of mobility after amputation is an important goal of lower-limb prosthetic care. Focus groups can be used to enrich our understanding of mobility, allowing users of prostheses to share their lived experiences. The purpose of this study was to identify conceptual gaps in our understanding of environmental factors that influence prosthetic mobility as described by the following subdomains: obstacle avoidance, time, distance, ambient conditions, attentional demands, terrain, and external loads. Results will inform the development of a self-report item bank for measuring mobility with lower-limb prostheses.

Methods

Four focus groups were conducted across the United States, representing differing environments encountered by prosthetic users. Purposive sampling was used to recruit lower-limb prosthetic users who were diverse with respect to level of amputation, age, gender, race/ethnicity, etiology, and time since amputation. Focus groups of 6-12 people lasting 1.5 to 2 hours were facilitated using a semi-structured approach to guide Discussions related to mobility. Transcripts were collaboratively analyzed by two research prosthetists using a phenomenological approach.

Results

Participants discussed ways that environment factors impact mobility. Examples included how walking in sand (terrain), hot temperatures (ambient conditions), and crowds (obstacle avoidance) increased the difficulty of prosthetic ambulation. Additionally, conversation during walking (attentional demands), walking long distances (distance), moving quickly (time), and lifting heavy objects (external loads) were noted to challenge prosthetic users.

Discussion

The proposed subdomains comprehensively described the impact of environment on prosthetic mobility, no new subdomains were added. Focus group Results enhanced understanding of how environmental factors affect mobility, providing a meaningful foundation for development of an item bank measuring lower-limb prosthetic mobility.

Conclusion

Focus groups provided valuable information about environmental conditions encountered by persons with limb loss and facilitated development of a comprehensive instrument to measure prosthetic mobility.