



Multidisciplinary approach

REHABILITATION, REABLEMENT, & RESTORATIVE CARE

This evidence theme is a summary of one of the key topics identified by a scoping review of rehabilitation, reablement, and restorative care research.

Key points

- A multidisciplinary approach to rehabilitation that is tailored to the individual and based at home can improve independent activities of daily living and mobility for aged care users.
- Multidisciplinary care results in better rehabilitation, reablement, and restorative care for service users when performed well. However, barriers to effective multidisciplinary care should be considered for effective service delivery.
- There is strong evidence to support the use of tailored, multidisciplinary, home-based care programs to enable older adults to maintain their independent activities of daily living, and improve memory, executive function, functional status, and everyday problem solving.

What is the multidisciplinary approach to rehabilitation?

Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, or interprofessional care as it is sometimes referred to, is when professionals from different disciplines, such as nurses, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists, work together to deliver the best care for an individual patient. Usually, the multidisciplinary team works towards predetermined goals of personal importance to the individual receiving care. This approach uses the diverse perspectives and skills of different healthcare professionals to rehabilitate, re-able, and restore patient function, delivering the highest quality care across a range of settings. [1]

How effective are multidisciplinary approaches?

We found 14 systematic reviews that reported multidisciplinary approaches to rehabilitation, reablement, and restorative care. Eight of these reviews reported on rehabilitation, six on a reablement approach, and one on restorative care. Overall, the provision of care by multidisciplinary teams was effective in improving independent function when carried out successfully. However, further research using larger samples in the context of aged care is required to improve our understanding of the barriers and facilitators faced in the delivery of multidisciplinary care.

The reviews identified that:

- Multidisciplinary care is often provided in home-based reablement services, by physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and nurses. [2]
- Complex reablement interventions should be committed to person-centred care, using a holistic approach that is provided by trained multidisciplinary staff who can conduct initial and ongoing assessments effectively [3]
- Standardised assessments focussed on meaningful goals should be used in diverse multidisciplinary teams to improve daily function of aged care users [4]
- Reablement programs have been delivered successfully using a multidisciplinary approach, providing interventions in the older person's own home. However, the barriers and facilitators associated with working in a team when developing, implementing, and evaluating interventions [5] as well as the behaviour, attitudes, and communication of team members should be considered [6]
- Multidisciplinary care coordination has been found to demonstrate positive cost-effective interventions; however further evidence is required [7]

What can an individual do?

- Individual healthcare professionals should be open to communication and multidisciplinary collaboration to achieve the best possible outcome for aged care users.
- Make sure every member of the team understands their role and responsibilities.
- Ensure direct care workers have a voice within the team as they often have close hand knowledge of the person and any difficulties they are experiencing, such as their level of pain.

What can an organisation do?

Organisations can support multidisciplinary approaches to rehabilitation, reablement, and restorative aged care by:

- Beginning with a well-defined model of multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary care, and work to develop holistic assessments that include reliable and validated outcome tools that can assess the effectiveness of an interprofessional approach. [6]
- Facilitate opportunities for case conferences between all members of the multidisciplinary team. Include the person and their family, wherever possible to discuss individual treatment goals and priorities.
- The roles of providers, consumers and caregivers in any multidisciplinary effort should be explicitly stated to establish collaboration between the team members. [8]
- The importance of a multidisciplinary approach should be integrated into teachings at a tertiary level for healthcare graduates and more informally for caregivers. [9]

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