THE LIVED-THROUGH EXPERIENCE OF SPINALLY REFERRED LEG PAIN: A DESCRIPTIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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THE RESEARCH QUESTION

- The aim was for a better understanding what it is like to be living with "sciatica" as experienced by participants.

- What is the lived experience of having spically referred leg pain from a physiotherapeutic perspective?

METHODS

Philosophy

- A descriptive-phenomenological stance using a Husserlian approach
- The research can only claim to be phenomenological if the researcher assumes the phenomenological reduction
- Taking a step back from the natural attitude
- Put aside all past knowledge about the object = bracketing
- Eidetic reduction = seeking the most invariant meaning through free imaginative variation and conscious acts

METHODS

Data collection

- Data were obtained through individual, face to face, in-depth interviews
- Four participants were asked to describe their concrete experience of spically referred leg pain, in as much detail as possible

METHODS

Analysis

- The 5 steps of descriptive-phenomenological method based on Giorgi:
  1. Reading to get a sense of the whole
  2. Constituting meaning units
  3. Transforming the everyday expressions into phenomenologically meaningful expressions.
  4. Synthesis of the transformed meaning units
  5. Determination of variations of constellations

FINDINGS – ESSENTIAL STRUCTURE

- One type of the lived through experience of spically referring pain from a physiotherapeutic perspective occurs in situations where P feels that pain is either always or intermittently present in the back or in the leg, coming more or less to the forefront of his/her mind, with the pain being more or less severe at times. The focus on pain is also affected by other factors such as work, leisure and/or daily activities. If treatments are not successful, the pain becomes more pronounced and the experience of life is negatively affected. However, the pain is not always understood by the person experiencing it, and the person may not always know the origin of the pain and does not always understand what it is experiencing. As a result of the pain, a wider range of emotional phenomena is experienced, which can be a source of negative meaning. However, despite the pain, P does not give up and holds on to what is important in life. The suspended treatment elicits a certain expectation that it may or may not help depending on the outcome of the treatment and is related to how others gain or lose P's trust. It comes to a point where P comes to terms with his/her situation, whether or not this is forced upon him/her and the experience takes on a more positive or negative outlook for the future.

States of Mind

- Presence of Pain
- Sense of diagnostic
- Uncertainty
- Resignation
- Treatment hope and expectation
- Trust in others
- Interference with life
- Emotional engagement
- Sense of resilience
- Presence of Pain

emes of Mind
The phenomenological analysis showed that the most essential aspect of lived experience was uncertainty when pain comes on. Anxiety or stress about the future, seeking validity if pain is real, and feeling unsure what is causing the pain were also key constituents. These findings have significant implications for understanding the phenomenon from a physiotherapy disciplinary perspective.

Clinicians may gain an appreciation of the complex factors which are meaningful to the patient and how these factors interrelate. Acknowledging these factors through experience is likely to enhance treatment hope and expectation, trust in others and resignation.

**IMPLICATIONS**

- This study contributed to the field of descriptive phenomenology, providing insights into spirituality and pain experiences, and has significant implications for understanding the phenomenon from a physiotherapy disciplinary perspective. Clinicians may gain an appreciation of the complex factors which are meaningful to the patient and how these factors interrelate. Acknowledging these factors through experience is likely to enhance treatment hope and expectation, trust in others and resignation.

**DISCUSSION**

The phenomenological analysis showed that the most essential aspect of lived through experience is the overwhelming presence of pain. The other key constituents, which are all interrelated, were: interference with life, emotional engagement, sense of resilience, sense of diagnostic uncertainty, treatment hope and expectation, trust in others and resignation.

Questions?

Thank you, Questions?