

DIPLOMA THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: Working Ability of People with Multiple Sclerosis (Options of Occupational Therapy Counseling)

Abstract:

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic autoimmune disease of the central nervous system affecting young people. Reduced ability to work is a serious consequence of MS. Academic literature addresses the negative factors leading to loss of employment. Occupational therapists can provide information and recommendations focusing on the work environment of people with MS through counseling. The aim of this thesis is to propose recommended strategies for people with MS in relation to work integration. The theoretical part of the thesis deals with factors impairing work ability, specific recommendations to influence them and important information stemming from legislation. The practical part verifies the findings based on the analysis of qualitative research among employed persons with MS, which is then further compared with information from the employer. The findings show that fatigue, mobility problems, cognitive impairment, urinary dysfunction and impaired thermoregulation in confrontation with barriers in the working environment affect the ability to work. Support and assistance from the employer, colleagues and family members, setting time according to individual needs, flexible working hours with the possibility of home-office, barrier-free environment and proximity to facilities, the possibility of temperature adjustment, quiet environment, the introduction of regular breaks with stretching, changing body position and the use of assistive technology, ergonomic and mobility aids, all appear to be important facilitators. The mental state of the person with MS can be a significant facilitator but also a barrier when trying to implement these measures. The result of this work is a brochure containing recommendations for patients of the Centre for Demyelinating Disease at the Department of Neurology, 1st Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in Prague.

Key words: Multiple Sclerosis, Occupational Therapy, Employment, Work Ability, Counseling, Recommendations