# Patient perspectives of recovery following major orthopaedic trauma: a systematic review and qualitative synthesis

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### Introduction

Recent orthopaedic trauma literature has explored patient experience. The aim of this review was to synthesise the qualitative research evidence of patients' perspectives and experiences of recovery following major orthopaedic trauma.

## **Methods**

A qualitative thematic synthesis was undertaken in accordance with the ENTREQ statement. The review was registered with PROSPERO on 17/02/2022 (CRD42022310712). A systematic search was conducted (28/02/22-03/03/22) of Medline, Embase, Psychlnfo, British Nursing Index, Amed, TRIP, Cochrane library, DARE, NHS EED was conducted. Backwards citation was used to search within included studies. Screening identified a subset of articles focusing on qualitative primary data from adult major orthopaedic trauma patients, since 2010. Data from included studies were extracted using a predefined extraction form. Themes were generated using the constant comparison analysis method using the participants' qualitative data (quotes).

"So, yeah, that would be frustrating because you knew it would never heal. It would just be a constant cycle" (Neal 2015)

The personal experience of time is not linear, but instead cycles and has pivotal moments.

A loss of sense of

self in part due to

reduced

participation in activity, and the subsequent impact

"you'll just have to learn to live with it" (Bernhoff 2016)

'Recovery' is a state
of acceptance in
which some aspects
of life are the same
as before the MT
injury, but some are
different.

Requires journeys of learned self-management, of the numerous physical and emotional consequences of MT injury.

on roles and relationships.

"It's huge. I can't go outside and play cricket with the kids, or kick the ball around with the kids"

(Ekegren 2020)

"I had no idea what I was supposed to be feeling, doing, not doing ... I didn't know what my arm was supposed to feel like or look like. That was terrifying" (Van Horn 2013)

Figure 1: Themes of time, loss of self, and journeys of self management towards recovery

# **Findings**

The searches identified 5648 distinct records. Following screening, 18 good quality primary research studies were included, involving 571 participants. Themes of time, loss of self, and journeys of self management towards recovery are described, with an illustrative quote, in figure 1.

# **Conclusions**

Recovery journey is non-linear and unbounded by time. Post-traumatic growth is possible in 'recovery', but issues stemming from the injuries also persist. Thus, recovery following major trauma is an individual process, requiring different levels and types of support at differing time points.

Future research should map the current levels of care following major trauma, cross-referencing the complexities of an individuals' recovery journey. Further, it needs to co-design meaningful outcome measures which reflect the recovery journey and long-term issues patients' experience.

# References

Bernhoff et al (2016) Patient Experiences of Life Years After Civilian Lower Extremity Trauma With Vascular Injury. **Eur J Vasc Surg** 52 690-695

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Van Horn (2013) Recovery from traumatic Injury: trauma patients' perceptions of facilitators and barriers. Int J of Ortho and Trauma Nursing 17 180-189