

Profile of stroke survivors attending a rehabilitation center in Huambo, Angola: a cross-sectional observational study

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Abstract

Introduction

The continued rise in the global prevalence of cerebrovascular diseases, strongly associated with lifestyle factors, is concerning and substantially affects patients' quality of life. Despite therapeutic advances, residual sequelae often persist, affecting self-care and functional status and, consequently, quality of life. In Angola, studies assessing the functional and cognitive status of people undergoing post-stroke rehabilitation remain scarce.

Objective

This study aimed to characterize the clinical, functional, and sociodemographic profile of stroke survivors undergoing rehabilitation.

Methods

We conducted a cross-sectional observational study with 230 community-dwelling adults undergoing rehabilitation at a specialized rehabilitation center. Data were collected between May and December 2024. The Barthel Index, the Berg Balance Scale, the Lawton Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) Scale, and the Six-Item Cognitive Impairment Test (6CIT) were administered. We used χ^2 tests, ANOVA, or t tests, with $\alpha = 0.05$.

Results

Participants' mean age was 56.35 ± 12.77 years; 54.8% were men. Among caregivers, 57.8% were women; 46.1% were aged ≥ 39 years; and 43.5% were participants' children. Participants with higher Barthel Index and Berg Balance Scale scores attended more rehabilitation sessions. Older participants were more dependent and had a higher risk of falls and cognitive impairment.

Conclusion

The sample shows a high burden of functional dependence and a substantial need for rehabilitation, with strong involvement of family caregivers. The findings support nursing strategies focused on self-care and caregiver education, and prospective studies should examine determinants and the effects of rehabilitation intensity.

Keywords

Stroke; Selfcare; Caregivers; Cognition; Functionality; Rehabilitation.

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