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Master's Thesis of St. Luke's International University Graduate School
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**Community-Based Pulmonary Rehabilitation for
Pneumoconiosis Patients in China:
A Qualitative Study Exploring Patient Experience**
中国のじん肺患者に対する地域型呼吸リハビリテーション：
質的研究による患者の経験

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Abstract

Introduction: Pneumoconiosis is a set of pulmonary diseases associated with inhalation and retention of an irritant industrial agent. Due to poor control of occupational hazards, pneumoconiosis has become a major public health concern across the world. Globally, China has the largest number of both incidence and prevalence of patients with pneumoconiosis. In the past few years, a patient advocacy non-governmental organization has been collaborating with Chinese local government to promote community-based pulmonary rehabilitation for patients with pneumoconiosis in rural areas. This study aimed to explore the experience of Chinese patients with pneumoconiosis in a community-based pulmonary rehabilitation program.

Methods: A qualitative study using web-based semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 pneumoconiosis patients. Interview data were qualitatively thematically analyzed. This study commenced after receiving ethical approval.

Results: All participants were men with pneumoconiosis and their ages ranged from 49 to 71 years old. Four themes emerged from the interviews: a) triggering of difficult life; b) reconstruction of life; c) sense of empowerment and d) gaps in PR Program. Pneumoconiosis had caused impaired well-being and family difficulties for patients. The community-based pulmonary rehabilitation program enabled them to restore their physical and psychosocial health. Patients were empowered by multiple support from the program, and they developed enhanced disease coping ability by adhering to pulmonary rehabilitation. Although participants reported their positive and beneficial experiences in the program, issues regarding patients' additional needs and existing barriers in pulmonary rehabilitation need to be addressed.

Conclusion: The community-based pulmonary rehabilitation program changed patients' lived experience with pneumoconiosis. Patients with pneumoconiosis achieved restored well-being and a sense of empowerment through engaging in pulmonary rehabilitation. Despite their positive experiences in PR, future research must establish patients' additional needs and unresolved barriers in PR.

Keywords: pulmonary rehabilitation, pneumoconiosis, patient experience