Cancer and rehabilitation in Norway

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Outline

• Background
  – Politics
• Services – not complete overview
  – Needs for rehabilitation
• Research
  – A short glimpse
Background – key players
General aspects

• Strong focus on rehabilitation in “official Norway”
  – Last 5-10 yrs - rehabilitation in general – cancer not focused
  – Term used differently
  – Rehabilitation = “Back to work” – cut budget on sick leaves?

• National strategy for rehabilitation 2008-2011
  – Generic focus

• National cancer strategy for 2006-2009/10
  – Emphasizes the need for rehabilitation services
Important definitions

• Norwegian official definition of rehabilitation
  "planned time-limited processes with clearly defined goals and means in which different actors cooperate in order to provide necessary assistance to the user’s own efforts to achieve best possible function and coping, independence and participation socially and in society”

• WHO definition
  "process aimed at enabling them to reach and maintain their optimal physical, sensory, intellectual, psychological and social functional levels. Rehabilitation provides disabled people with the tools they need to attain independence and self-determination”

• Complex vs. ordinary rehabilitation
  – > 6 professionals vs. 4-5 professionals
Norwegian Cancer Society

• Strong focus on rehabilitation for years
• Important initiator
  – Specific fund raising in 2007
• Supports 10 services
  – In all four Norwegian health regions
  – From municipals to university hospitals
  – In-patient & out-patient services
  – Different diagnoses and disease status
  – Evaluation from RCT to less formalised
Norwegian Health care system - public

- Shorter stays – fewer beds
  - Increasing costs
- More “acute” conditions
  - Cure vs care
- Rehabilitation services
  - Historically private initiatives – gradually integrated into public
  - Traditionally: Neurology and traumatology
  - Newer: Stroke, heart disease….
  - Rehabilitation: Generic or disease-specific?
    - Unresolved issue
    - Successes: disease-specific services? Heart and Stroke
- Rehabilitation relatively poorly researched
Rehabilitation Services for cancer patients
Rehabilitation services – cancer pts.

• Exact overview not available

• Municipals – especially the larger – might provide
  – National overview not available
  – Are increasingly expected to offer rehab. services

• All hospitals
  – Self-management centres - statutory
    ▪ Courses 10-15 hrs. to improve coping + some cancer-specific courses
  – General supportive services – varying degrees
    ▪ Social workers, psycho..., nutritionists, physiotherapists+++

• The 4 academic oncological departments
  – Various supportive services
    ▪ Some for specific diagnoses – some generic
  – Out-patient multi-disciplinary rehabilitation service at one

National Resource Centre for Late Effects, Department of Oncology
Rehabilitation services - 2

• Private rehabilitation institutions – in-patient rehab.
  – In all four health regions
  – 3-5 weeks stays
  – Funded by official health budget
    ▪ Compete for status as officially recognised
  – “Ordinary” rehabilitation (4-5 professional groups)
  – Mostly generic - not cancer specific
    ▪ Some have specialised services for cancer pts.

• Rehabilitation hospitals – within public health care
  – Primarily other conditions than cancer
  – Specialized services for some cancer pts. – e.g. lymphomas

• Rehabilitation depts. at ordinary hospitals
  – Some cancer pts. with special needs?
Ca. patients admitted to in-patient rehab.

No. stays by cancer pts. to ordinary and complex rehabilitation 2006-9

- Complex
- Ordinary

Year

National Resource Centre for Late Effects, Department of Oncology
Inpatient ordinary rehabilitation by region

Ordinary rehabilitation; stays by region 2006-2009

Year

S.-East

West

Mid.

Nor.
In-patient rehabilitation; patients & effects

**Patients**
- Males to hospital-based **complex rehab**.
- Females to private institutions **ordinary rehab**.
- Majority of pts. to complex rehab. >70 yrs
- Majority of pts. to ordinary rehab. >65 yrs

**Effects**
- Generally: Subjectively or objectively assessed effects not available
- Some centres assess subjective outcomes
- One published study with 5 year follow-up *(Fismen et al 2000/2007)*
  - Open study of breast cancer pts.
  - Immediate improvement - uncertain long-term effects
The Montebello-centre

- Since 1991
- 700-800 pts. / year
  - From whole country
- Courses – to improve coping
  - 5 -10 days duration
  - Mainly organised by cancer type
    - Not by specific need(s)
- Content
  - Information - lectures, physical activity and peer-support
- Patients very satisfied
  - Health-related effects?
  - = rehabilitation?
Needs for rehabilitation - types

N=1287
27-64 yrs.
70% females

Thorsen et al., NCRS 2010
Research
Research – a very short glimpse

• Rehabilitation in general
  – Relatively poorly researched
  – These days – a national program launched!

• Cancer and rehabilitation – topics researched
  – Cancer and work life – NOCWO initiative
  – Physical exercise – stand alone interventions
  – On-going projects – several presented here

• Adjacent areas of possible relevance
  – Late effects & palliative care
  – Few intervention studies – strategically wise?
Conclusions - questions

• A strong political focus on rehab. in general
  – Evidence based policy?

• Services at different levels health care system
  – Number and effects uncertain
  – Organisation = challenge for administrators, researchers, patients?

• Optimal content of existing services?
  – Provision of services with documented health gain?
    ▪ Physical activity and nutrition
    ▪ Same needs as the population in general

• Quality-control / research needed
Oslo University Hospital HF is owned by the Norwegian Health Region South-east and consists of the previous Aker University Hospital, Rikshospitalet University Hospital, and Ullevål University Hospital. The enterprise delivers specialist health services and also covers the whole country, the health region, or Oslo in various disciplines. Oslo University Hospital HF is the largest University Hospital in Norway and is responsible for a large fraction of the medical research in Norway.