

Changes in the participation status of laryngectomized patients in a self-help group after hospital discharge

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Objective

The purpose of this study is to elucidate the participation of laryngectomized patients in a self-help group (SHG) during the first year after hospital discharge.

Methods

- Forty-seven patients who underwent total laryngectomy and consented to participate in the study responded to a questionnaire survey regarding registration and participation in the SHG.
- The questionnaire was administered before and 3, 6, and 12 months after hospital discharge.
- Survey items were basic attributes, self-help group registration and participation status, and reasons for not joining the group.
- The questionnaire sheet for the pre-discharge survey was handed to each patient and collected before discharge. For the post-discharge survey, they were distributed and returned by mail.
- Basic attributes in the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Registration, participation status, and reasons for nonparticipation in each patient were chronologically listed to look for any changes in participation status and associated factors.
- This study was approved by the Ethics Committees of Juntendo University and the affiliated hospital.

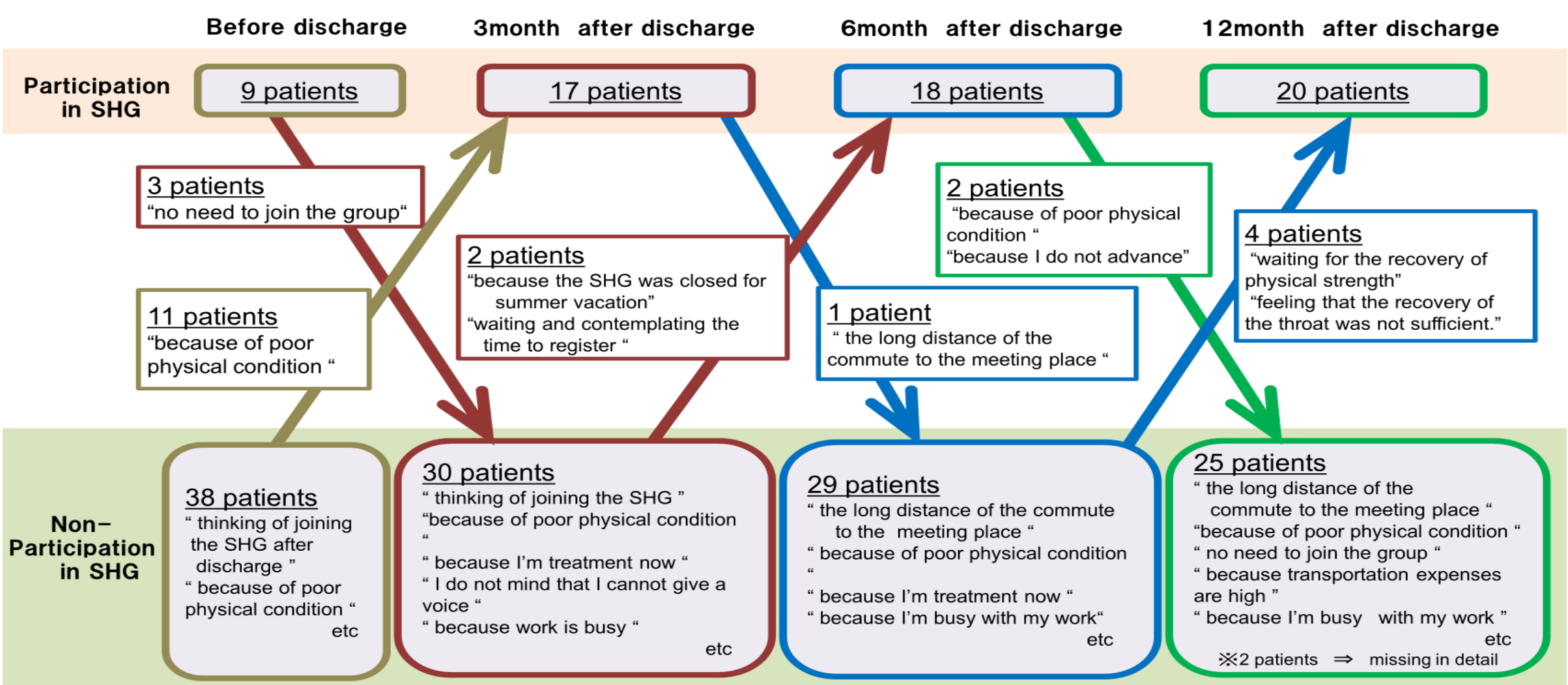


Figure 1. Changes in the Participation Status

Table 1. Basic characteristics

			n=47		
	mean (range)	n(%)			n(%)
Age at surgery	64.2 (46 - 82)		Diagnosis	Hypopharyngeal cancer	24 (51.1)
Sex	Men	39 (83.0)		Laryngeal cancer	16 (34.0)
	Women	8 (17.0)		Esophageal cancer	5 (10.6)
Employment Status	Employed	21 (44.7)	Treatment	No respons	2 (4.3)
	Unemployed	25 (53.2)		Operation only	34 (72.3)
	No respons	1 (2.1)		& Pre operative Radiation	8 (17.0)
				& Post operative Radiation	5 (10.4)

Results

- Twenty-seven Patients (57.4%) became the member by the end of first year after discharge.
- Only nine patients (19.1%) were registered with the SHG before hospital discharge.
- During the 3-month period after discharge, seventeen (36.2%) completed their registration, but three patients (6.4 %) resigned because of “no need to join the group”.
- Four patients (8.5%) had postponed the registration after a discharge than six months due to poor physical condition.
- One patient (2.1%) who was registered before discharge resigned between 6-12 months after discharge, because he doesn’t advance esophageal speech method.
- Twenty patients (42.5%) never attended the SHG during the first year after discharge, because they each think “I live alone and don’t have opportunities to talk to others”, “it’s just not in my nature” and “the long distance of the commute to the meeting place”.
- On the other side, 11 patients (33.3%) mentioned before discharge that they were “thinking of joining the SHG after discharge as soon as they regain physical strength,” showing their intention to join the group, but they had not felt fully recovered and thus had not yet registered with the SHG.
- There was the patient who cannot participate to the self-help group by economic reasons or because he was busy with his work.

Conclusion

In these patients who underwent total laryngectomy, participation status in the SHG during the first year after discharge strongly depended on their physical recovery, regardless of the time during the year. The reason for not yet feeling fully recovered despite the passage of time after the surgery and the stabilized incision site may involve eating and swallowing difficulties, which take up all their physical strength, and the adverse effects of postoperative chemotherapy. To support laryngectomized patients who are willing to join the SHG, it is important to develop a continuous support system that meets the physical needs of individual laryngectomized patients, and a way of the activity of the self-help group that meets the life-style and the economic conditions after discharge. The findings study suggest that the content and methods of the current activities should be reviewed to meet the wide range of needs that laryngectomized patients develop after hospital discharge.