

# Patient experiences of a functional goal orientated back group; What factors are important? A qualitative study.

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## Background

Effective long term management of low back pain remains a challenge. Group exercise is recommended but patient experience of this is unclear.

## Objectives

To understand the patient experience of a functional goal orientated back group in secondary care to inform practice.



## Methods

A qualitative design using phenomenological analysis. A content review of a back group feedback book from 2017-2019 was undertaken to form interview questions on recurring themes for randomly selected patients discharged from the class recently and at 1 year. 14 participants were interviewed in 1:1 semi-structured interviews or focus groups.



## Results

- Reported valued themes;
- Motivation from staff and other patients
  - Support and knowledge
  - Intensity of exercise
  - Increased confidence in ability to self-manage.

Many reported improvements in pain and function despite having failed 1:1 physiotherapy in the past. Participants interviewed immediately post-discharge were highly motivated, stating intentions to continue the specific programme. The 7 participants interviewed 1 year post discharge had not continued the specific exercises but were applying the principles they had learnt to daily function, such as how to bend and lift.

## Conclusion

Patients valued a functional back group and would have liked to have been referred as first line treatment. It appears to be a combination of specific exercise, motivation and intensity of exercise that is important. Future developments would identify which patients may be seen in a group setting as first treatment.

