**A narrative experience of three patients with CCHS about a therapeutic recreation summer camp**

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Narrative report represents a qualitative research method to study the individual’s experiences. Using this approach we investigate the experience of 3 patients with Congenital Central Hypoventilation Syndrome (CCHS) participating at the therapeutic recreation (TR) camp during summer of 2011, a girl aged 21 (A), a young adult aged 23 (D) and a boy aged 17 (S). During the two following post-camp weeks participants wrote a short report about their feelings and experience about the camp. A text analysis resulted in a set of three principal themes.

1. Socialization and empathy. The words used were: *“collaboration”* (when two or more people work together to achieve the same thing); *“sharing”* (to tell someone else about your thoughts, feelings ideas); *“socializing”* (to spend the time when you are not working, with friends or with other people in order to enjoy yourself); *“empathy”* (the ability to share someone else’s feelings or experiences) and *“understanding”* ( a positive, honest, sympathetic relationship between two people or groups).

2. Self-help (the activity of providing what you need for yourself and others with similar experiences or difficulties without going to an official organization); increase in self-esteem (belief and confidence in your own ability and value); self-discovery (when you learn about yourself). The phrases they used were : *”my best satisfaction was to conclude the activity tasks I was asked to* *do”*; *“sometimes I felt like the protagonist”; “even if I am a well known absent minded, I was able to bring home all my stuff“; “I felt happy because I was helping a friend of mine in his daily needs and what I saw was a gratifying smile on his face”.*

3. Concrete thought about experience : *“breathtaking adventure”,* one for all downhill with a sort of scooter; the holiday was *“full of fun”* (playful and often energetic activity); *“dinners were noisy”* (making a lot of noise); one of them described how important it was for the relation with his roommate *“to cut his nails and beard”*. And again: *“Switzerland was nice, doctors and nurses were all very nice and kind, but next camp should be better in another place in order to see different* places”.

Narrative reports highlight that the camp was a positive experience from several point of view including socialization, wellness experience, perceptions of therapeutic recreation. Although narrative approach is a laborious and not easily applicable method to a large sample sizes, it permits either developing in-depth understanding of individual’s experiences and identifying common themes. Also it’s helpful for patients themselves in order to support them in rethinking about personal and emotional experience. We recommend incorporating this qualitative method into the programme of the TR camps.