

Seating, arm and hand function with Duchenne Muscular dystrophy (DMD)

By Werge, Birgit

DMD is a progressive disorder with a continuous loss of muscle power. Most adults with DMD are unable to perform any active movements except for a few movements of their hands.

Persons with DMD generally consider the following factors to be of importance for quality of life: the ability to drive the electric wheelchair, to use the electrical functions of the wheelchair, to operate the computer, and to remain seated in the wheelchair all day.

65 DMD-adults were assessed and interviewed to get information about their physical functional abilities.

All of them were able to be seated all day and get around indoors and outdoors with specially adjusted seats and support systems. All but one was able to drive the electrical wheelchair. The majority were able to operate the electrical functions of the wheelchair, and many were able to operate the computer.

Since nowadays DMD-adults have a longer lifespan, the continuous loss of muscle power is a great challenge for technology. In order for these persons to maintain the ability to operate the wheelchair and to endure to be seated, ongoing development and adjustments of technology is demanded.

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