

TASK: STD-1 PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WHEELCHAIR STANDARDS

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Rationale

Development and application of performance standards is perhaps the most productive activity in terms of affecting the improvement to the quality of wheelchair products for the largest number of users. However, standards development requires research and testing in order to validate the test procedures prior to their acceptance in national and international standards. Standardized disclosure of test and measurement data in presale brochures is a means by which consumers can accurately compare products prior to purchase commitment.

Goals

1. To participate in the development and revision of wheelchair standards to ensure product quality for consumers.
2. To participate in the development and revision of wheelchair standards to provide sufficient information for product comparison.

Methods Summary

Three basic methods were employed. The first methods consisted of active participation in the standards meetings at both the ANSI/RESNA and ISO levels. This included chairing several of the working groups, and for two years chairing the RESNA Technical Guidelines Committee. The second method was to provide supporting research and development for the creation and revision of standards. Without supporting data or devices, reasonable standards can not be developed. The third method employed applying the standards to commercial products to provide comparison data. This information was published to assist clinicians, consumers, payers, and manufacturers.

Outcomes Summary

The key outcomes from this task can be summarized as follows:

- coordinated the development of a complete electric powered wheelchair/scooter electromagnetic compatibility standard which is in the voting process as of 12/98,
- contributed to the development of an electronic integration interface standard (ISO CD7176/17) being developed through TIDE, a program of the European Economic Community,
- conducted a study to compare the results of common hospital type wheelchairs with active duty ultralight wheelchairs,
- conducted a study to analyze the performance of selected lightweight wheelchairs.
- standards which consumers, practitioners, manufacturers and purchasers can rely upon more complete information by which to compare products,
- quality of wheelchairs will be improved.

Recommended Future Developments

Work on the development of standards must continue in order to ensure improvement in wheelchairs. Moreover, product comparisons are required to provide consumers, clinicians, and manufacturers information about the safety, quality, and value of wheelchairs. There are a substantial number of wheelchair standards in development and in revision. The application of wheelchair standards continues to produce higher quality wheelchairs.

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