



Title	Three-Wheel and Four-Wheel Scooters: Alternatives to Powered Wheelchairs?
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Aim

To determine under what circumstances a 4-wheel scooter (FWS) or 3-wheel scooter (TWS) would be of greater benefit than an electric powered wheelchair (EPW), and what stakes are involved by adding scooters to the list of mobility assistance devices offered by the *Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec* (RAMQ).

Conclusions and results

The findings show that a scooter is of greater benefit than a motorized wheelchair when it meets the user's mobility needs and the user has the ability to operate it. Scooters actually seem to support social integration, mainly because they have a less stigmatizing appearance. Moreover, since their average cost is half that of EPWs, their allocation could represent savings. However, scooters do not necessarily represent an alternative to powered wheelchairs. To transfer the scooter allocation program from the ministry's two fiduciaries to the RAMQ mobility assistance program, regulations will have to be adapted, and scooter performance indicators adopted and incorporated into the approval process. Furthermore, a postallocation evaluation of mobility devices will be essential for program management. This will mean integrating the existing clinical and administrative data of the ministry and RAMQ programs.

Recommendations

- 1) Allocate a scooter instead of an EPW whenever potential users have the necessary abilities to operate it and provided that the scooter can meet their mobility needs.
- 2) Review the eligibility criteria of the ministry and the RAMQ programs for the target clientele and the scooter clinical utility criteria.
- 3) Standardize the assessment methods used by fiduciaries and by the RAMQ.
- 4) Compare scooters in light of the parameters related to the target clientele, the clinical utility, and the performance of these devices.
- 5) Adopt the key elements defining the target clientele, the clinical utility, and the scooter performance to compare scoot-

- ers among themselves and with other mobility assistive devices within the framework of the RAMQ approval process.
- 6) Form a committee composed of representatives from the ministry, the RAMQ, the fiduciaries, the *Office des personnes handicapées du Québec*, users and other experts involved in the allocation of mobility assistive devices.
- 7) Implement relational databases to gather data on the target clientele, the clinical utility, and the performance of the devices together with the accident rates and administrative data to link the information for decision-making purposes.
- 8) Set up a technology watch to monitor the developments in and marketing of mobility devices and keep abreast of the utilization objectives for the new devices.

Methods

Review of the scientific, medical, standards- and regulation-related publications on the topic. Data extracted from 5 other scooter allocation programs were compared to the results of the review of the available literature and the opinion of clinical experts from a group of consultants and other resource persons in the assistive-technology and rehabilitation fields.