

Rehabilitation After Discharge: Using Specialist Fitness Instructors to Support the Hospital Therapists

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Introduction

The UK Stroke Strategy highlights the importance of community stroke exercise programmes. The National Institute for Health Research indicates the need for rehabilitation which is one step removed from therapy.

Action for Rehabilitation from Neurological Injury (ARNI) is a UK charity which has refined an approach to community stroke recovery utilising intensive task-related practice and resistance training allied to the personalising of some physical coping techniques. ARNI trains and matches specialist exercise instructors with stroke survivors who require further functional training after formal therapy stops.



Methods

The Luton Chaul End Project was a pilot study to explore the efficacy of the ARNI intervention. In Chaul End Centre, Luton, 4 blocks each of 3 month's training took place from July 2010 to July 2011 using 4 ARNI instructors in weekly sessions lasting for two hours.

Participants (n=24) were evaluated on mobility, range of movement, fatigue, mood, confidence, continency material use, care package content, ambulance call outs and A&E attendance.

Results

Participants reported improved mobility, range of movement, fatigue, and confidence. Service audit data reported 24 ambulance call-outs for fallers during the year preceding intervention. In the year of the intervention there were 0 call outs, with an ambulance service saving of £7,200. This particular statistic was mirrored the following year.

Further savings of £5,482 were due to reduction in care packages, nursing input, catheter care, respite care, appliance support and medications.



Conclusions

ARNI sessions can be a cost-effective way to provide specific exercise in the community with excellent physical and psychological outcomes. A further project with larger numbers and wider outcome measures will be complete by mid-2013. This will feed into multi-centre clinical evaluation work currently being prepared by teams from Brunel University, London and NIHR's Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care in the South West.

