

ReTrain rehabilitation programme for people who have had a stroke



Prof Sarah Dean, Chief Investigator for the ReTrain Study

“ReTrain is a complex intervention and requires commitment from our participants, who have been fantastic about signing up to the study. They have really engaged with the trial and stuck with us throughout the full nine month duration of the project. Our early findings suggest that it will be feasible and acceptable to run a definitive trial of ReTrain”

The ReTrain project, supported by PenCLAHRC and the Stroke Association, has been investigating the effectiveness of a community-based rehabilitation training programme for people who have had a stroke.

The project was developed following a question raised by a stroke survivor taking part in the PenCLAHRC question generation process – he wanted to know whether he should be following a popular, but untested, approach to stroke rehabilitation called ARNI.

Strokes are the third largest cause of death in the UK and approximately 110,000 people have a stroke each year in this country. Strokes are the leading cause of disability in adults. Of the 900,000 people in this country who have had a stroke, 300,000 live with moderate to severe disability. Due to the long-term impact strokes have on the patient, their family and carers, offering continuing support is a priority.

What Happened Next?

From the generation of the research question through to consultation on design and delivery, public and patient input has shaped and steered the ReTrain project.

A group of stroke survivors and their families have advised the team on a range of developmental projects. This work resulted in the team being awarded funding by the Stroke Association to carry out a pilot randomised controlled trial to assess the feasibility and acceptability of the ReTrain programme, which is based on ARNI.

Conducting the ReTrain pilot trial with 50 stroke survivors, the team have established that it will be feasible to carry out a larger trial of whether ReTrain can support participants in their ongoing recovery after discharge from NHS services. The larger trial will be a fair test of whether ReTrain works to improve the lives of stroke survivors. It will also allow organisations providing stroke support services and patients to make informed decisions on whether to offer and take part in ReTrain programmes.

References:

Sarah G Dean, Leon Poltawski, Anne Forster, Rod S Taylor, Anne Spencer, Martin James, Rhoda Allison, Shirley Stevens, Meriel Norris, Anthony I Shepherd, Raff Calitri. Community-based Rehabilitation Training after stroke: protocol of a pilot randomised controlled trial (ReTrain). *BMJ Open*, Oct 2016



Useful Links:

clahrc-peninsula.nihr.ac.uk/research/retrain

arni.uk.com

www.stroke.org.uk



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