

Walker, Dawn-Marie, et al, 2022 Abstract

Early Electrical Stimulation To The Stroke-affected Arm

Objective

The study aimed to explore the barriers and facilitators to implementing early therapeutic **electrical stimulation (ES)** treatment from both the patient and therapist perspectives as part of a feasibility study.

Results

The barriers to **ES** treatment cited by the therapists outweighed the barriers mentioned by patients. Therapists' barriers included lack of confidence and staff knowledge regarding **ES** and time pressures of delivering the **ES**. No patients mentioned time as a barrier and considered the treatment regime to be acceptable; however, lack of staff support was mentioned 14 times by them.

Although initially the perceived barrier for therapists was time restrictions, after analysing the data, it appears that confidence/knowledge is the real barrier, and time is the manifestation of this underlying self-doubt.

Patients were able to confidently self-manage treatment, and although efficacy was not measured, patients volunteered information regarding its perceived benefit, and no adverse effects were reported.

Participants and Researchers

Fifteen patient participants were interviewed - nine in the intervention group; three in the control group, and three carers. Sixteen therapists – nine occupational therapists and seven physiotherapists - took part in the three focus groups.

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Methods

Interviews were conducted with patients and their carers and focus groups with the therapists post-intervention period. Interviews were in the patient's homes and for the focus groups in a specialist stroke unit in Nottinghamshire. Participants were randomised 1:1 to receive usual care or usual care and **ES** to wrist flexors and extensors using the **NeuroTrac Rehab** device (Verity Medical). for 30 min, twice a day, Monday to Friday for three months in conjunction with usual care, or the control group of usual care. Participants randomised to the control group did not receive **ES** therapy but received all usual care which included all the therapy interventions that are standard practice as per national clinical guidelines.

The full abstract can be found at [Designing a trial of early electrical stimulation to the stroke-affected arm: Qualitative findings on the barriers and facilitators - Dawn-Marie Walker, Joanna Fletcher-Smith, Nikola Sprigg, Anand Pandyan, 2022 \(sagepub.com\)](#).