

Title: DOES A LITTLE GO ALONG WAY?

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Purpose: To cope with the increasing numbers of stroke survivors in South Africa living with disabilities, an appropriate rehabilitation service, for stroke survivors who are discharged from hospital without any rehabilitation was investigated. This project aimed to determine if a group walking task specific community (where carers and family assist in the training classes) based program is an effective approach to stroke gait rehabilitation. Thus determining the effectiveness in terms of improvement in walking competency, compared with the present therapy program

Relevance: This study aimed to determine if task oriented group training classes, assisted by carers and family, are effective in providing a greater proportion of the post acute stroke patients, with residual disability, with formal rehabilitation. Furthermore, in light of the white paper (1994) that emphasizes that all citizens with disability should receive the necessary rehabilitation they require, this study sought to determine a resource efficient solution to a problem that has not been addressed to date. There has been no previous study of this nature in South Africa, thus this research is relevant.

Participants: One hundred and forty four subacute stroke subjects were recruited for the principal study from Chris Hani Baragwaneth hospital, Helen Joseph hospital and Charlotte Maxeke hospital. Subjects were less than 6 months post stroke prior to inclusion into the study.

Methods: All subjects fitting inclusion criteria were evaluated by a blinded assessor. Subjects are stratified into 3 groups according to their gait speed as measured by the 10mwt. Subjects are then randomised into one of 3 treatment interventions groups. Group A was a multidisciplinary group run once a month. Group B a strength training group run once a week for 6 weeks. Group C a task oriented training group run once a week for 6 weeks.

Statistical Analysis: Data was analysed utilising an intention -to -treat protocol Descriptive statistics (e.g. mean, standard deviation, median) described group data. and 95% confidence intervals for continuous variables. For discrete (categorical) variables data summary will be in terms of frequencies, percentages/ proportions, cross tables and 95% confidence intervals.

For the primary objective (SMWT at completion of the intervention) groups were compared with respect to the change in distance covered in six minutes from baseline to six weeks using an analysis of covariance with baseline distance as covariate. Other continuous parameters such as walking speed, timed 'up and go' were analysed similarly to SMWT at six weeks.

Success in the SMWT was defined as an increased distance walked of 28m or more.

Results: To Follow

Conclusions To Follow