

HIPS/19/45 - Promoting Physical Activity and Exercise after Stroke using a Text Messaging Intervention

70% of stroke survivors experience enduring physical impairments and associated disabilities. After rehabilitation, survivors are signposted to exercise opportunities (post-stroke exercise classes, walking groups, conventional gyms and given home exercises) to support recovery. Despite this, our research shows many struggle with motivation and feel abandoned by services after rehabilitation. Consequently, participation in physical activity (PA) and exercise is low. Behaviour change interventions delivered by Short Message Service (SMS) can improve motivation and adherence to physical activity (PA) in older populations and could ameliorate feelings of abandonment at the end of rehabilitation. Our pilot work shows that most stroke survivors use SMS messaging. An SMS intervention that provides real-time support for goal setting, planning, and prompts for self-monitoring after rehabilitation is a potentially effective way to enhance motivation, combat the feeling of abandonment, and support PA and exercise adherence. We will: a) Conduct focus groups with stroke survivors to understand how an SMS intervention could work and what features are acceptable (text frequency content, tone, narrative features) b) Co-design, develop, pilot and refine a new SMS intervention with stroke survivors and health professionals c) examine intervention and key aspects of study feasibility and acceptability for testing in a future trial.