

Staff perceptions of multidisciplinary interaction in stroke rehabilitation

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Multidisciplinary team working is a core component of rehabilitation which is considered one of the mechanisms that contributes to the superiority of specialist stroke care over generalist services, but there has been little research into multidisciplinary team function. As part of a programme of work to explore and evaluate multidisciplinary working in stroke rehabilitation, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 16 professionals working in six in-patient stroke rehabilitation services in a large UK conurbation to elicit their views of multi-disciplinary team meetings (held weekly to discuss and plan patients' progress). Interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed using themed content analysis. This revealed five major themes: 'purpose and duration of meeting,' 'benefits,' 'problems,' and 'professional interaction.' Participants felt the meetings were to; share information, set goals, plan discharge and share professional expertise; however meeting length was constrained by time away from providing active treatment which could prevent achievement of these aims. Flexibility was valued to ensure time spent discussing each patient was relative to their needs. Professionals valued open discussion to enable wide contributions and described benefits of mutual support and collective decision-making, however lack of preparation, staff engagement, motivation and focus in the discussions were highlighted as issues. They felt the clinical leadership and effectiveness of the chairing could be improved to address these issues, as well as the time-keeping and structure of the meetings. Further work is underway to address these issues and evaluate their impact.

Biography

Louisa is a Knowledge Transfer Partnership Associate working for the University of Manchester in partnership with the Greater Manchester Cardiovascular Network. She currently manages a program of work aimed at assessing the impact of using standardized outcome measures in multidisciplinary settings in stroke rehabilitation.

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