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Does English proficiency impact on health outcomes for inpatients undergoing Stroke rehabilitation?

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Questions: Does English proficiency impact on health outcomes for inpatients undergoing stroke rehabilitation? Does the frequency of interpreter use impact on these outcomes?

Design: Retrospective case control study.

Participants: People admitted with a primary diagnosis of the stroke to participate in inpatient rehabilitation hospitals within the study period were included. Participants were categorized into two groups based on their preferred language. Group 1 comprised people with native or near-native English proficiency. Group 2 comprised people with low English proficiency who were likely to require an interpreter. Participants from Group 1 were matched for age (+/- 3 years) and gender with those from Group 2.

Outcome measures: Retrospective data on length of stay, discharge destination and Functional Independence Measures (FIM) were gathered from patient electronic medical records between 25/09/2008 and 07/05/2012.

Results: Participants in the two groups were similar for most of the measures of the premorbid level of function ($p>0.05$), however, Group 1 had a small but significantly greater number of comorbidities at the time of admission than Group 2 ($p=0.02$). Group 2 showed a greater improvement in total


FIM from admission to discharge ($p=0.04$). No significant differences were found between groups in length of stay, discharge destination and time spent in allied health therapy. The frequency of interpreter usage also did not significantly alter these outcomes.

Conclusion: English proficiency and frequency of interpreter usage do not appear to impact on the length of stay in inpatient rehabilitation, discharge destination or FIM at discharge for people with stroke undergoing inpatient rehabilitation.

Speaker Biography

Sarah Davies is Clinical Coordinator of Community Therapy Services and Senior Clinician Neurological Physiotherapist for Northern Health Service in Melbourne. She completed her Bachelor of Physiotherapy at La Trobe University in 2000 and her Masters in Applied Science (Research) at La Trobe University in 2016. She has two research publications: Davies SE et al (2015) Does English proficiency impact on health outcomes for inpatients undergoing stroke rehabilitation? *Journal of Disability and Rehabilitation*, pp 1-9. Davies SE et al (2016) Does cultural and linguistic diversity affect health-related outcomes for people with stroke at discharge from hospital? *Journal of Disability and Rehabilitation*. pp 1-10. Her interest in language proficiency and its impact on health outcomes has sparked from work in culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the United Kingdom, Bangladesh and Australia.

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