Early supported discharge (ESD) services for stroke patients

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Stoke services in developed countries usually feature a period of care in hospital. However, patients and families often face major challenges at the time of discharge home from hospital and in the subsequent weeks of adjusting to care at home. Early supported discharge (ESD) services challenge this model of care by aiming to accelerate discharge home and provide rehabilitation input in the home setting. A substantial number of clinical trials have tested this approach to care but there remain significant challenges in describing the important components of ESD services and ensuring that they are implemented widely.

The objectives of this presentation are to:

- summarize the rationale for ESD services after stroke;
- provide a detailed description of these services as tested in the randomized trials – we are aware of 16 randomized trials of which two tested very atypical ESD services and a further two are not yet reported. These trials suggest that ESD services will:

  - reduce the length of hospital stay;
  - reduce the number of patients requiring long term nursing home care;
  - reduce the number of patients with long term disability;
  - summarize the progress in developing guidance for establishing and running such services.

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Stroke rehabilitation and early supported discharge in Ireland

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Introduction.– Ireland is currently analyzing the implications of developing the preferred pathway of Early Supported Discharge (ESD) through a national research project.

Materials and methods.– The research team have reviewed the randomized control trials literature and studied cost benefit analysis in ESD.

Results.– The literature suggests that there may be a trend towards cost reduction associated with ESD compared with centre-based rehabilitation. Length of stay for stroke patients is shorter and internationally the clinical outcomes appear equivalent to conventional centre based care. Review of the available literature suggests that ESD is feasible and comparable to or superior to conventional care. The research team are currently reviewing the outcomes from a year-long ESD initiative at a large urban general hospital. The objective is to present a case for facilitating the appropriate discharge of suitable stroke patients from acute hospitals to home by supporting them with a well coordinated community rehabilitation team.

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