Stroke rehabilitation and early supported discharge in Ireland

M. Delargy

NRH, Dun Laoghaire, Ireland

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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