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Task-specific practice of dressing tasks improved dressing performance and scores on the Functional Independence Measure after stroke

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Background: There is emerging evidence to suggest increasing intensity of practice results in improved functional outcomes for people with stroke, however, little research involving intensity of practice and retraining in activities of daily living has been published.

Aim: This study aimed to measure change in the dressing performance of inpatients with stroke who attended a twice-weekly occupational therapy dressing group using the Functional Independents Measure (FIM).

Methods: A before-and after study design was used. Retrospective data were analysed from all inpatients who attended the group from one Sydney hospital. Patients attended a dressing group for one hour, twice a week during admission between 2007 and 2008. Groups were supervised by occupational therapists. Each participant worked towards one or more dressing goals. Scores on the FIM (Upper and Lower Body items) were compared at baseline and discharge.

Results: Data were analysed for 101 people with stroke. A mean improvement of 2.2 points was found for upper body dressing scores (range 0 to 7), 2.7 points for lower body dressing scores (range 0 to 7), and 5.5 points for total dressing scores (range 0 to 14). With a total of 210 goals recorded 41% focus on shirt/ upper body dressing, 36% pants/ shorts, 12% on socks and shoes and 11% with buttons/ fastenings.

Conclusions: These data suggest that task-specific practice of dressing tasks focused around measurable goals can make a clinically significant difference to dressing performance during inpatient rehabilitation. During this presentation we will provide examples of dressing goals and recording sheets. We will also discuss more rigorous methods which need to be used in future to minimise selection, measurement and intervention biases.