

Cognitive Vitality and Brain Health: Stroke/Neurological

In 2009, about 315,000 (1.1%) of Canadians living in the community reported they suffer from the effects of a stroke. This estimate excludes people living in institutions, and it is known that many stroke survivors who require rehabilitative care live in complex continuing care facilities. (Statistics Canada)

Rehabilitation helps stroke survivors – whether they are discharged home or to another facility – develop the strength and confidence to live as independently as possible. (Public Health Agency of Canada)

Research

Research at Parkwood Institute into stroke rehabilitation is having a tremendous influence on stroke care nationally and internationally.

Stroke Rehabilitation Evidence-Based Review

With over 4,000 research studies examining stroke rehabilitation therapies, it was challenging for clinicians to have the latest research evidence to use in their practices. Now, thanks to a research team at Parkwood Institute lead by Dr. Robert Teasell, that information is available in a format that can be easily accessed and used by doctors, therapists and nurses.

Known as the Stroke Rehabilitation Evidence-Based Review (SREBR), this has become the leading and most recognized review of stroke rehabilitation literature in the world. The research team has just completed its 16th edition, and through funding from the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Canadian Stroke Network, it is freely available on the internet at www.ebrsr.com.

“May I first congratulate you and your group on the excellent SREBR, it is becoming a standard reference in the UK...again, many thanks for your excellent work.”

Roger Mepsted, Neurologist, United Kingdom, 2006

“The SREBR has become an unparalleled resource for the development of stroke rehabilitation guidelines, recommendations and models of care.”

Dr. Antoine Hakim, Canadian Stroke Network Scientific Director, Order of Canada Reported in BRAINwaves February 2011

“On behalf of the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Canadian Stroke Network, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous contribution of Dr. Robert Teasell and his staff...to the development and updates of the Canadian Best Practice Recommendations for Stroke Care.”

Dr. Patrice Lindsay, Heart and Stroke Foundation, 2013

The SREBR is also tackling key issues in stroke rehabilitation which are relevant to best care of patients, with Dr. Teasell and his colleagues believing the most promising potential for improving stroke care can be achieved through greater emphasis on rehabilitation and neurological recovery.

Long-Term Stroke Rehabilitation Management Clinic

There is a growing realization of the importance of continuing rehabilitation well beyond the first six months after a stroke. Historically, because it was thought the period of neurological recovery ended between three and six months after the stroke, few rehabilitation resources were available after six months. With research suggesting rehabilitation for many stroke patients may be a lifelong process, Dr. Teasell and his colleagues are re-examining the chronic stage of stroke management with an emphasis on rehabilitation.

Now at Parkwood Institute, through the new Long-Term Stroke Management Clinic, chronic stroke rehabilitation is being addressed. The first of its kind in Canada, this Clinic will improve the long-term care of stroke patients through a standardized reporting system for stroke outpatient clinic patients, better coordination of stroke rehabilitation follow-up and improved assessment of the long-term needs of stroke rehabilitation patients.

With many long-term stroke management clinical resources and leading research expertise already in place, Parkwood Institute is in a unique position to become a world leader in this area. These resources include physician-led clinics, the Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Program (CORP), Community Stroke Rehabilitation Teams (CSRT), and many stroke research projects underway. Enhancing the coordination of these resources, will expand access to services in Parkwood Institute and the community, and improve the efficiency of providing care for chronic stroke patients and their caregivers. Cognitive Vitality and Brain Health will also help support the growing research focus on long-term stroke rehabilitation management at Lawson's Aging, Rehabilitation and Geriatric Care Research Centre. Together they will serve as an academic model for long-term stroke rehabilitation management across Canada.

Southwestern Ontario Community Stroke Rehabilitation Teams: Innovative Rehabilitation in the Home

The South West LHIN has three Community Stroke Rehabilitation Teams (CSRTs). These specialized, multi-disciplinary teams assess and provide stroke rehabilitation to patients in their own homes, and provide advice and counselling to their families and other caregivers. The CSRT teams include registered nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, social workers, therapeutic recreation specialists and rehabilitation therapists who work collaboratively to provide therapy, education and support to their patients. Since these teams began in 2009 they have served over 1,600 stroke survivors.

Research on the impact of the CSRTs by Dr. Teasell and his research team shows these patients do better in terms of day-to-day activities, exhibit fewer symptoms of depression, and require less caregiver assistance between admission to the program and discharge. Furthermore, since program initiation, several patients admitted to the CSRT program from a long-term care facility were able to return to the community