Physical therapy helps recover arm function in chronic CVA

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(HealthDay)—Physical therapy promotes the recovery of arm function

and neuroplasticity in all chronic stroke patients, according to a study published online April 25 in the *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*.

Raquel Carvalho, P.T., from the University of Minho in Braga, Portugal, and colleagues assessed the effect of physical therapy based on problem-solving in recovering arm function in three chronic stroke patients. Functional magnetic resonance imaging (during motor imagery and performance), the action research arm test, the motor assessment scale, and the Fugl-Meyer assessment scale were used to evaluate neuroplasticity and function.

The researchers found that all patients recovered more than 20 percent after the intervention. At baseline, stroke patients had increased areas similar to healthy subjects during motor execution but not during imagination. After the intervention, all patients increased activity in the contralateral precentral area.

"This study indicates that four weeks of physical therapy promoted the recovery of arm function and neuroplasticity in all chronic stroke patients," the authors write. "Future research is recommended to determine the efficacy of this therapy."

More information: Abstract/Full Text (subscription or payment may be required)