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The app that is improving therapy for stroke survivors

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A mobile phone app is improving care for stroke survivors and helping health staff make evidence-based decisions 'on-the-go' to speed up recovery—according to new research from the University of East

Anglia.

The ViaTherapy phone app is designed to help health staff find the best treatment options for people to regain arm function when recovering from a stroke.

Researchers from UEA's School of Health Sciences worked with the community neuro-rehabilitation team at Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT) to test the app.

Results from the project published in the journal *BMJ Open* Quality show that ViaTherapy could enhance and improve therapy services for stroke survivors, by increasing access to evidence on the best interventions for quick and effective treatment.

Dr. Nicola Hancock, from UEA's School of Health Sciences, said: "This was, from the outset, a truly collaborative project between UEA and the CPFT community rehabilitation team, demonstrating the impact of working together on quality improvement initiatives.

"The app addresses an important challenge—how busy clinical therapists can rapidly access best available evidence on arm rehabilitation after stroke.

"In our project, clinicians found the app easy to use and supportive of their decision-making around treatments, helping to build their confidence in using evidence-based practice. Some even commented that they had increased the intensity of the therapy they offered because of using the app.

"We are excited to pursue future quality improvement and co-production partnerships with the team," she added.

Charlie Dorer, the CPFT community neuro-rehabilitation team's clinical manager and co-author of the report, said: "In community neuro-rehab services we strive to design the best possible care around our patients. One of the areas we focus on is working with stroke survivors to recover function in their arms.

"We were delighted to work with UEA on a quality improvement project trialling the ViaTherapy app—which is an excellent tool, usable in any setting to synthesise the best evidence for clinical decision making, and empowering staff and patients. It's absolutely fantastic for the team to see these results published, which will inform our next steps and further work in partnership with researchers."

"Evidence-based practice 'on-the-go': using ViaTherapy as a tool to enhance clinical decision making in upper limb rehabilitation after stroke, a quality improvement initiative" is published in the journal *BMP Open Quality*.

More information: Nicola J Hancock et al. Evidence-based practice 'on-the-go': using ViaTherapy as a tool to enhance clinical decision making in upper limb rehabilitation after stroke, a quality improvement initiative, *BMJ Open Quality* (2019). DOI: 10.1136/bmjoq-2018-000592

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