Reviewer’s report

Title: Extra upper limb practice after stroke: a feasibility study

Version: 1 Date: 15 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Jannette Blennerhassett

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for addressing the comments made in the earlier review. Most areas have been addressed. There are still a few minor points that could further enhance the manuscript.

Length of stay was identified as an important factor for design of interventions. 35% of the sample did not complete the 4 weeks planned intervention. This is a very important issue for study designs, and ensuring interventions are suitable for real world situations. An additional sentence would be helpful in the manuscript, especially to help other researchers plan suitable durations of interventions.

Please clarify what "scheduled upper limb therapy" means in the context of the MDT. This could vary from place to place, with some MDT having specific UL classes. In other places it could have different classifications. This could be clearer with a couple of examples of what constituted UL therapy in routine care.

line 263. The "100%" needs clarification, as could be misleading. The sentence would be clearer by saying "rates of dexterity increased by 100%" (or similar).

Point 6 for reviewer 2. I appreciate that staff were used to measure the dose as part of the study. It would be helpful to know how much staff time was needed to get the self-directed exercise program to occur on the ward environment. This can be quite a challenge to set up. It would be helpful to unpack what was needed for the study vs what was needed to set up practice in a clinical setting. Did patients initiate the program without prompts by staff? Then if a majority of practice was done in a group setting, how much staff time did that take to get it happening? And would that need to be a highly trained therapist or just a person to prompt the participants to get together. I would like a little more elaboration of these issues to address reviewer 2’s query (no 6 on the table). These are important for implementing practice and designing studies.

Thanks for your paper.
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