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A word from our Chair

It is an understatement to say that 2020 has been a difficult year and has seen all stroke nurses having to adapt to changes in practice in the way we work. Covid restrictions have meant that we took the decision to cancel our annual conference and our AGM for 2020. This was a huge disappointment and this decision was not taken lightly. One of the decisions is that all committee members will remain in post until September 2021. We have also decided to push back the dates for re-election by a year (e.g. if someone is due to stand down in 2020, this will now be 2021). Hopefully by this time next year we will have some resolution but if not we will aim to have a virtual conference day and AGM instead. So keep an eye out for updates.

The Covid Lockdown undoubtedly had an effect on the numbers of strokes and TIAs that presented in March and April this year and this appears to have happened not only in Scotland but across the world. The World Stroke Organisation held a presentation / discussion group on this in the Spring and many of the participants in the online discussion expressed concerns about the impact this would have at a later date. This is likely to be reflected in the SSCA 2020 data as highlighted at the SSCA Virtual Meeting earlier this month.

However it hasn't been all doom and gloom. Many of us have adapted our practices, found new methods of reviewing minor strokes and have examined our working practice for follow up and found that these have worked. I worked for 4 months from home, contacting my patients by phone or virtually and found that most of the time this worked well and patients came back to me more readily because, if I'm honest, I was easier to get hold of. It also reduced my travel time and I really didn't miss my daily commute! We also saw our partners Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland and the Stroke Association introduce befriender and virtual support for those in need and there is an article about this in the Newsletter.

The Thrombectomy training for nurses has now started with the North of Scotland group being the first to get started with the new training. Amanda Johnstone from CHSS is leading this and has provided an article for the newsletter with updates and information. This is a very exciting development and opens up a new scope of practice for stroke nurses.

The SSNF are currently exploring if we can set up some virtual training sessions for 2021. The plan for this will be devised at the November 2020 meeting and if you have any suggestions for topics you would like us to cover please get in touch.

Finally, I and the SSNF Committee would like to say a huge thank-you and goodbye to Dorothy Storey who has been our Northern Isles rep for nearly 20 years. Dorothy will retire in Nov 2020 and her deputy Gowri Saravanan will step into her shoes. Dorothy it has been a pleasure to work with you and enjoy your retirement.

To all of you take care and please keep in touch and let us know about anything exciting and new happening in stroke in your area.

Linda Campbell, SSNF Chair SEPT 2020.



National Thrombectomy Education Programme



Backed by the Scottish Government a National Thrombectomy service within NHS Scotland will provide a valuable addition to current stroke services.

Currently no hospitals in Scotland can offer thrombectomy although the estimate is that 600-800 patients each year could benefit from this treatment. If we could treat these patients, about 300 would have reduced disability and over 100 would avoid dependency on others and the need to live in a nursing home ([SSIP National Report 2019](#)).

As part of the Stroke Improvement Plan educating healthcare staff is an integral part of the success of the National Thrombectomy service.

Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland ([CHSS](#)) were successful in a bid to the Scottish Government for a National Thrombectomy Educator. The 2 year post commenced in January 2020 and the role and remit is to develop and offer thrombectomy education to all stroke nurses in health boards across Scotland over the two year period.

The Thrombectomy nurse education, called STAT+, consists of presentations and scenarios developed with input from clinicians, the SAS and the INR teams. The education will be a full day and can be run from sim centres or classrooms, sim men are not a necessity. Prior to training all attendees must have completed NIHSS training ([NIHSS training link](#)) and STAT training.

The Thrombectomy Educator will roll out the STAT+ education, initially beginning in the North of Scotland with the hub hospital commencing training prior to each spoke hospital within that catchment. Further role out to hubs and spokes throughout Scotland will commence within the following months in agreement with the local thrombectomy lead.

If you have any questions regarding the STAT+ education, then please contact your local Thrombectomy Lead who can forward any questions to Amanda Johnson, CHSS National Thrombectomy Educator.

Article submitted by: Amanda Johnson, CHSS.



Launch of New STARs Advancing Module

'Hyperacute Stroke Treatments including Thrombolysis & Thrombectomy'

On 17th July 2020 STARs Core Competencies & Advancing Modules were launched on the new site. This included the new module:

'Hyperacute Stroke Treatments including Thrombolysis & Thrombectomy'

This module aims to provide an overview of hyperacute treatments including thrombolysis and/or thrombectomy after acute stroke. It is relevant to any healthcare professional involved in any part of the patient's pathway.

The introduction of thrombolysis and thrombectomy has greatly increased the importance of teamwork. Whilst only part of the content may be directly relevant to your role as a stroke nurse, the module will ensure you understand the roles of other members of the team, and you can see how your role plays a crucial part in the patient's pathway. To gain a certificate of successful completion you will need to answer all the questions correctly.

Throughout the module there are links to additional information and resources.

Since launch visitor numbers to the site & module assessment submissions has been very positive. A total of 432 Hyperacute Stroke Treatments assessment attempts have been submitted with 127 successful certificates awarded period 17th July 2020 till 31st August 2020. See table below:

Hyperacute Module eLearning Figures:

Country	Assessment Attempts	Certificates Awarded
Scotland	173	53
Rest of UK	210	57
Rest of World	49	13
Overall Total	432	127

See page 9 of this newsletter for more information on the STARs eLearning resources.

All **STARs** e-Learning resources, including the **Hyperacute Stroke Treatments** module can be accessed @: <http://chsselearning.org.uk>

Article submitted by: Katrina McCormick, CHSS.





The Stroke Association in Scotland responds to the COVID-19 challenge

The coronavirus pandemic and lockdown has changed the way we think and forced us as a UK organisation to review and quickly reorganise how we support people affected by stroke. We have not been alone in facing such huge challenges.

In Scotland this meant responding to requests for help and sharing information so people knew how to access our support.

Stroke Association Stroke Connect support offer

During the pandemic we were keen to ensure that we were complimentary to the work of the NHS and our third sector partners and by the end of April we introduced our temporary Stroke Connect offer, a check in and non-clinical information support telephone call which was implemented across the UK.

Our aim was to work with NHS teams to support people being discharged after a stroke earlier than they would under normal circumstances. We have been working with Ninewells hospital, Forth Valley Royal and surrounding community hospitals, and the Royal Infirmary in Glasgow. Where NHS Stroke Support has adapted and have been able to provide more follow up calls we have stopped providing Stroke Connect and are offering Here for You support where requested.

Currently the Stroke Connect Support offer is under review.

Here for You telephone support offer

In the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic, we provided training and support for volunteers who wanted to share their lived experience and help provide a listening ear as well as reduce isolation and loneliness to someone living with the effects of stroke or a family member caring for them. The volunteers provide a weekly telephone call which can last up to 12 weeks with the aim of encouraging self-management.

We now have a growing group of volunteers in Scotland who are helping to deliver this, and we aim to continue and develop this further. More information available @:

<https://www.stroke.org.uk/finding-support/here-for-you>





The Stroke Association in Scotland responds to the COVID-19 challenge cont...

Sharon, one of our volunteers says:

'I remember what it was like for me, having my world turned upside down and feeling alone. So I thought there would be someone out there who could benefit from a chat and a listening ear'.

Helpline

We have taken many calls relating to stroke and coronavirus. As the calls increased in number and length, we increased capacity to meet need by training staff who might have been furloughed, as Helpline assistants.

Support for people with aphasia

In June we launched '[Getting online for people with aphasia](#)'. This new tool has been produced to help people with aphasia get online, create an email account and access tools such as Skype, WhatsApp and Zoom.

Lived experience coronavirus survey

We gathered the views of people who have been undergoing stroke treatment and rehabilitation and the effect the pandemic has had on their experiences. These views will go some way to informing us of what the care has been like and where outstanding needs lie.

If you have any questions on any of the above, please email:

Karen.Garrott@stroke.org.uk or call: 07776508609

Article submitted by: Angela Macleod, Stroke Association



NotFAST2 study

Background

Fatigue is a major issue for stroke survivors, and many have said that it's the worst symptom they experience after their stroke. Fatigue after stroke isn't related to previous effort levels and it's not improved by rest. Research has shown that between 25 and 85% of stroke survivors experience fatigue. Fatigue can have a negative effect even on those who make a good physical recovery. It affects stroke survivors' ability to engage with rehabilitation, quality of life (for example, through being too fatigued to take part in hobbies or spend time with friends and family) and is associated with increased mortality. The last 10-15 years has seen a huge increase in the amount of research being carried out into fatigue after stroke. However progress in the management of fatigue has been slow and there's still very little evidence about how best to treat fatigue after stroke. Fatigue has been identified as a priority for stroke research by both people affected by stroke and healthcare professionals.

Aims

This research aims to create a fatigue management programme that can support stroke survivors living at home to self-manage their fatigue. Fatigue after stroke can present in different ways in different people, for example some may struggle physically while others will have problems with thinking and memory, and some may experience both. The fatigue management programme will be created to be flexible to people's individual needs.

Methods

In order to create the programme the research team will draw on the knowledge and experience of experts in fatigue – stroke survivors, carers, and professionals working in fatigue services.

The research will happen in three stages:

1. The research team will review the fatigue services that current exist in the UK, both general and for specific conditions (e.g. Multiple Sclerosis). They'll look at the characteristics of the programmes and the content of the programmes they offer. This will allow the research team to learn from services that already exist and bring this to their stroke specific programme.
2. The researchers will interview stroke survivors, carers and clinicians, and hold two focus groups with stroke survivors with fatigue. They'll ask about their experience of fatigue, what helps fatigue or makes it worse, and strategies they've used that have and haven't worked to help manage fatigue.
3. Finally, they'll use the information from stages one and two of the research to co-produce the fatigue management programme with stroke survivors with fatigue, their families and professionals.

Impact

This project will create a fatigue management programme that has drawn on the needs and the knowledge of both stroke survivor and professional experts in fatigue. Before this programme could be used in practice to help stroke survivors with fatigue to manage their condition it will need to be tested in a larger research study. Once they have created the programme the research team plan to test the programme to see if it works (i.e. does it help stroke survivors with fatigue). They'll also investigate whether or not it would be cost effective for the NHS to offer the programme, for example whether it could reduce the number of GP appointments stroke survivors make to discuss fatigue, therefore saving money.

The NotFAST2 study is inviting as many AHPs, nurses, doctors or psychologists from fatigue services, or those who have an interest/expertise in fatigue management across a range of long-term conditions, to take part in the survey. To access the survey click on the link below:

RSURVEY LINK: <https://nottingham.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/nottingham-fatigue-study-notfast2-copy>

Community Stroke Hub – supporting delivery of remote community stroke rehabilitation

Are you a nurse or AHP working in stroke community rehabilitation? Have you had to quickly adapt and change your practice to deliver rehabilitation remotely? If so, the **Community Stroke Hub** will be of interest to you!

New challenges in community stroke rehabilitation

The ongoing pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges in the provision of rehabilitation for stroke survivors and continued pressure on rehabilitation professionals in the delivery of rehabilitation and longer-term support across community sectors. Face to face delivery of rehabilitation has been limited and for many of us, this has 'looked' different (e.g. videocalls, virtual consultations and telerehabilitation). Technologies, for example, telerehabilitation and online support that once seemed an 'option' has now quickly become an essential component of practice to ensure patient safety and ongoing provision of rehabilitation and support. As we recover from the early stages of the pandemic, demand for rehabilitation and longer-term self-management support will increase – we need to meet this rehabilitation need as effectively and efficiently as possible.

The Community Stroke Hub – supporting remote community stroke rehabilitation

In response to our changing rehabilitation landscape, we have created a tailored resource for nurses and AHPs working in community rehabilitation. The Community Stroke Hub has been designed to provide a '**one-stop shop**' for resources, information and support for the delivery of remote or virtual rehabilitation, or a blended model of face-to-face and remote rehabilitation, during and beyond the pandemic.

In the Community Stroke Hub, you will find 'dip-into'

Resources to support remote community rehabilitation, including guidelines and signposting to different platforms. You will also find a **Community of Practice** to share your thoughts and experiences about delivering rehabilitation during the pandemic with others. Importantly, it's a place to find out what's working, what's not working, where to find additional resources *and* to connect with others working in community rehabilitation settings across the UK.

Who developed the Community Stroke Hub?

Led by Dr Rebecca Fisher, we are a group of stroke clinicians and academics from across the UK with expertise in community stroke rehabilitation. We acknowledged at the start of the pandemic that there would be unique challenges to remote service provision for stroke community teams and **we wanted to do something to help** rehabilitation staff transition to remote working. We knew that there was a lot of information and resources available, but that rehabilitation staff didn't have time to trawl through all of it. We decided that a dedicated online stroke community rehabilitation resource could act as a 'one stop shop' for resources and to provide support for rehabilitation staff as they navigated the less familiar and challenging territory of remote rehabilitation. And so the Community Stroke Hub was born!

Where to find the Community Stroke Hub?

The Community Stroke Hub is hosted through the Bridges Self-Management website. It is free to join and provides easy access to a wealth of relevant information and support for all nurses and AHPs involved in community stroke rehabilitation across the UK.

To access **Resources** to support remote community stroke rehabilitation, click here:

<https://www.bridgesselfmanagement.org.uk/csh-resources/>

To join the **Community of Practice**, click here:

<https://www.bridgesselfmanagement.org.uk/csh-community-of-practice/>

We hope you find The Community Stroke Hub useful and welcome your feedback if there's anything you feel is missing or could be highlighted more through the Hub.

Best Wishes,

Community Stroke Hub Team: Rebecca Fisher, Fiona Jones, Lisa Kidd, Julie Duncan Millar; Rebecca Palmer, Lesley Scobbie, Nicola Hancock and Kelly Francis.

Relaxing outdoor space for Fife Rehab Staff

Sir George Sharp Unit (Fife Rehab Services) received a donation from the Sir Tom Moore funds from NHS Charities Together. The money was used to buy patio furniture which would provide staff with a relaxing outdoor area to enjoy some time out from the ward. An outside area at the rear of the ward was chosen and the activities coordinator tidied up and added some beautiful plant tubs. Before and after pictures below. Staff now have a lovely patio area to relax and enjoy their break. A table has been ordered, and it is on its way, to complete the area.

Before:



After:



Article submitted by: Norma Moir, Activities Coordinator, Fife Rehab Services.



STARS eLearning Resources

CHSS eLearning portfolio is the result of an innovative collaborative partnership between Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and the University of Edinburgh's Interactive Content service. All CHSS eLearning resources have been created by multidisciplinary healthcare professionals, patients & carers from across Scotland. These resources are a unique & valuable educational portfolio. Created in Scotland and utilised worldwide. On 17th July 2020 STARS Core Competencies & Advancing Modules were launched on new site. This included the 'Hyperacute Stroke Treatments including Thrombolysis & Thrombectomy' module. See page 3 of this newsletter for more information on the new module.

All **STARS** e-Learning resources can be accessed @: <http://chsselearning.org.uk>

STARS eLearning access figures* since launch:

*(Figures from 17th July 2020 till 31st August 2020).

A total of **12,999 Users** have visited the STARS resources.

With a total of **700,791** individual **Pageviews**.

78% of visitors are **New Users** Vs **22%** of visitors are **Return Users**. A total of **689 Core Competency** certificates & **922 Advancing Module** certificates have been awarded.

These are impressive figures for the first 6 week period since launch. It is also encouraging to see many people return to use the resources on multiple occasions.

Moving forward

Many of the STARS working groups have commenced updating the content of individual resources.

Please Note

HEARTE resources will move across to the new URL in coming weeks. More information will be circulated through the SSNF shortly.

At present HEARTE should be accessed @: <https://www.heartelearning.org>



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Save The Date!

UK Stroke Forum Conference 7th -9th December 2020

The Annual UK Stroke Forum Conference will take place Monday 7th–Wednesday 9th Dec 2020. The UK Stroke Forum is the UK's largest multidisciplinary conference for stroke care professionals. This years conference is going to be a bit different as its going virtual. Registration will open soon and you are advised to book early to take advantage of the special discounted early birds rate.

Visit the website for everything you need to know and regular updates about the conference@:

<https://stroke.org.uk/professionals>

For further information contact: ukstrokeforum@stroke.org.uk



If you would like to have an article considered or if you have something you think would be of interest for the next Newsletter please contact: linda.campbell8@nhs.net or your local committee member.

