
Foreward

Stroke Rehabilitation is a deceptively broad and diverse field of study. A wide variety of pharmacological and therapeutic interventions are available, some of which have been rigorously evaluated while others require further study. This review helps to synthesize the results from over two- thousand studies evaluating the effectiveness of these treatments. Stroke rehabilitation was often referred to as a “black box” owing largely to the inability to explain the success of many of these complex treatments, using a reductionist approach. However, as we unravel the mechanisms through which many treatments work, we not only know that stroke rehabilitation can dramatically improve stroke patients’ recovery but we now have a greater appreciation of which elements work.

This review arose from a vision for integrated stroke care in Ontario and is a direct result of one of the recommendations of the Ontario Stroke Rehabilitation Consensus Panel, 11 years ago in 2,000. We are grateful to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care of Ontario (MOHLTC) and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario (HSFO) for their initial financial support; however, the project has been funded over its last 10 editions by the Canadian Stroke Network, a federally-funded Center of Research Excellence. Without their continued support, the SREBR would not have been updated beyond 2003 or enjoyed the success that it has. Special thanks to Dr. Tony Hakim, Katie Lafferty, Kevin Willis, and Nicol Korner-Bitensky at the CSN for believing in this project.

This project has been the result of many individuals’ hard work. Since the

first edition was completed in 2002, several individuals, including Sanjit Bhogal, Nestor Bayona, Chelsea Hellings and Jamie Bitensky have moved on to pursue graduate degrees and other opportunities. Norine Foley, the original project coordinator remains along with Katherine Salter who joined the team in 2004. The SREBR has been primarily their work. Most recently Elizabeth & Hannah Kruger, Shelialah Pereira and Ross Graham have helped with data abstraction and review. Andrew McClure and Richa Mehta have helped with the development of the education modules. Dr. Mark Speechley has provided epidemiological expertise. Dr. Jeffrey Jutai was part of the project team until he took up a position as Professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences within the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Ottawa. We are also grateful to Dr. Hussein Noorani, Becky Skidmore and the team at the Canadian Coordinating Office of Health Technology (CCHOTA) who were extremely helpful with the extensive initial literature search. Mrs. Patricia Pugh handled much of the paperwork and seemingly endless e-mails.

We would also like to thank the Parkwood Hospital Foundation, which is now the new St. Joseph’s Health Centre Foundation, who sponsored and assisted with the initial proposal for this project. We are also grateful to Parkwood Hospital, St. Joseph’s Health Care London and in particular the Lawson Health Research Institute for providing us with the space necessary to house the project.

The SREBR team are now part of the Aging, Rehabilitation & Geriatric Care

program of the Lawson Research Institute.

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This 14th edition of the Stroke Rehabilitation Evidence-Based Review, like the other editions, can be copied at no cost, for clinical use or for teaching purposes, but the content is the property of the authors and the Canadian Stroke Network.

The goal of this project is to produce an up-to-date, easily accessible evidence-based review of the stroke rehabilitation literature. We have made the process through which we arrive at our levels of evidence as transparent as possible. We are particularly excited about our new, case-based educational modules, which are an attempt to reformat the information of

the SREBR in a way that is more relevant and user-friendly to students and residents, who may not fully appreciate the contents of the SREBR in its current format. This project is an ongoing effort, which continues to evolve as new studies are published and as users provide feedback. The information presented is continually modified as new data becomes available or as our interpretations are challenged. Stroke rehabilitation professionals are strongly encouraged to carefully critique their area of interest and send us any comments, care of Dr. Robert Teasell: robert.teasell@sjhc.london.on.ca

Hopefully you will find this information useful in your clinical and research practices. You can access the entire

evidence-based review at:
www.ebrsr.com

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