

Speech Pathology Weekend Service in Inpatient

Rehabilitation: A Qualitative Study Exploring

Perspectives of People with Stroke



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PURPOSE

To investigate the perspectives of people with stroke (PwS) about a speech pathology (SP) weekend service in inpatient rehabilitation.

RQ1. What aspects of a SP inpatient rehabilitation service are perceived to be important to PwS who have an acquired communication and/or swallow impairment?

RQ2. How might the provision of a SP weekend service contribute to stroke inpatient rehabilitation?



BACKGROUND

- Allied health weekend services in inpatient subacute facilities can improve clinical and organisational outcomes.¹
- Inpatients and family members support the use of allied health weekend services.²
- Research has focused on the role of physical rehabilitation in an allied health weekend service. Little is known about the role of a speech pathology weekend service.
- Speech pathologists have different views on the role of a SP weekend service.³
- To date, the role of SP weekend subacute inpatient services for PwS has not been investigated.

METHODS

Design: qualitative; semi-structured interviews

Participants: PwS admitted to an inpatient rehabilitation unit, for at least two weeks, received communication and/or swallowing therapy, discharged into the community, and did not require an interpreter.

Data collection and analysis: transcribed verbatim, reflexive thematic analysis

Characteristics of Participants (PwS)			Context	
			Time post discharge from rehab unit	
			Within 2 months post discharge	6-12 months post discharge
Swallow impairment (severity)	Mild	n ≥ 1	n ≥ 2	n ≥ 2
	Severe	n ≥ 1		
Communication impairment (severity)	Mild	n ≥ 1		
	Severe	n ≥ 1		
Gender	Male	n ≥ 2		
	Female	n ≥ 2		
Total		6		

Impairment severity on admission as per AusTOMS rating scale.
Ethics approval: Barwon Health HREC #21/128

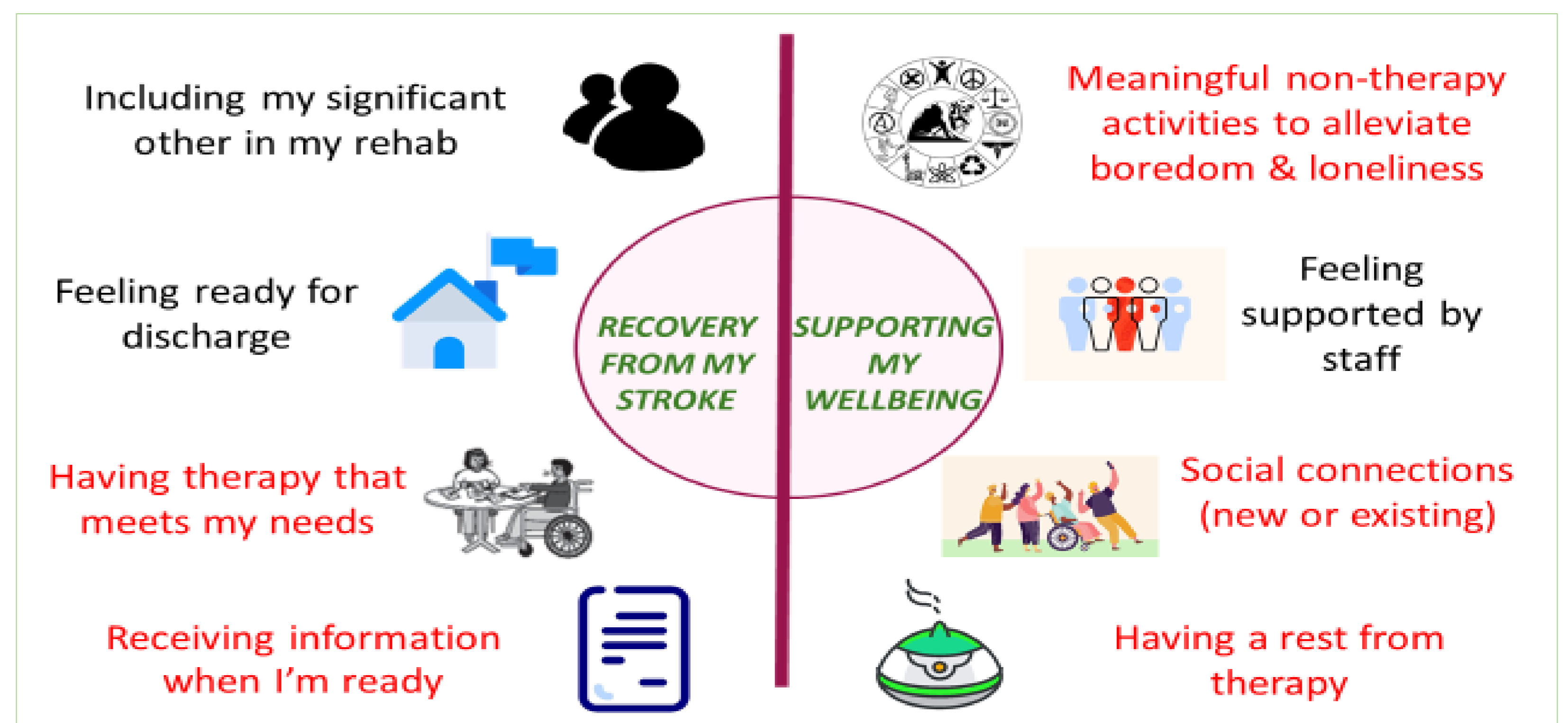
RESULTS

Participants: 6 PwS were interviewed

	Gender		Communication impairment: severity		Swallowing impairment: severity		Time post discharge	
	male	female	mild	severe	mild	severe	< 6 months	> 6 months
Total	2	2	4	2	0	1	3	3

RQ1: What aspects of SP rehabilitation are important?

Two themes captured aspects of a SP rehabilitation inpatient rehabilitation service that were perceived as important: *Recovering from my Stroke* and *Supporting my Wellbeing*. Four subthemes were generated for each theme.



RQ2: How might a SP weekend service contribute to stroke inpatient rehabilitation?

The aspects that were identified by participants as important within the context of a SP weekend service are reflected in the subthemes highlighted in red. Some participants supported the idea of a SP weekend service to increase therapy intensity. However, weekends were also perceived as an opportunity to focus on wellbeing by engaging in activities not directly related to rehabilitation, or to facilitate rest from a busy weekday therapy schedule.

DISCUSSION

This study provides preliminary insight into the perspectives of PwS on SP weekend service in stroke inpatient rehabilitation settings. The perceived role of weekends to support wellbeing as well as to provide therapy differs from recent survey responses of Australian speech pathologists^{3,8}. A common perception from these clinicians described the ideal SP weekend service in stroke inpatient rehabilitation facilities as an extension of the weekday service, highlighting the importance of assessment, therapy, education and training.

CONCLUSIONS

Participants provided a range of perspectives on the potential value and purpose of a SP weekend service. Whilst some identified an increase in SP input on weekends as a way to achieve rehabilitation goals, others valued weekends as opportunities for rest, social interaction and self-care outside of the Monday-Friday rehabilitation schedule. Findings support the importance of flexibility and a patient-centred approach when considering the role of this service. Further research to explore the perspectives of patients who have experienced a weekend service, and to investigate the impact of this model of care (in terms of clinical outcomes, workforce and cost effectiveness) is recommended.

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