

Title

Impact evaluation of an online training course (iSARAH) for hand therapists: Preliminary findings

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Objectives

To evaluate the impact of iSARAH on the adoption of the SARAH programme into clinical practice by hand therapists.

Methods

iSARAH is a free online course for NHS hand therapists on the NICE recommended SARAH (Strengthening And Stretching for Rheumatoid Arthritis of the Hand) programme for people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) affecting their hand function. The course went live in April 2017, and a mixed-methods evaluation on the impact of iSARAH is under way.

On completion of iSARAH, therapists completed an online questionnaire. They rated their perceived competence and intention to deliver the SARAH programme, and identified any foreseeable barriers to its implementation in their clinical practice.

At 6 months follow up, therapists will be asked to report their actual use of the SARAH programme, and also on the clinical usefulness and patient satisfaction with the programme. We will also explore therapists' (n=30) experiences in implementing the programme in their practice.

We aim to enrol 200-250 therapists with 70% providing 6-month follow-up data.

Results

As of 01 June 2017, there were 234 course registrants of which 55 had completed the course and provided end-of training feedback. We found: 1) 46/55 (84%) therapists intend to use the SARAH programme in their practice and reported that they are confident in their ability to implement it; 2) 48/55 (87%) therapists were either very satisfied or extremely satisfied with iSARAH; 3) 44/55 (80%) therapists identified barriers to implementing the SARAH programme in their departments; and 4) Lack of time, insufficient numbers of patients with RA and lack of exercise equipment were the major barriers reported.

Conclusions

Initial results of the impact of iSARAH are very encouraging. More data will be presented at the BAHT 2017 conference.