

11th IFSHT Congress

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Title: An online training programme to facilitate the implementation of an evidence-based hand exercise programme into clinical practice

Objective: The Strengthening And stretching for Rheumatoid Arthritis of the Hand (SARAH) is a 12-week tailored hand exercise programme recommended by the NICE guidelines for people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA).

We launched an online training on the SARAH programme (iSARAH) for NHS occupational therapists and physiotherapists to facilitate the uptake of SARAH into practice. The objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of iSARAH.

Materials and Methods: Data collection is ongoing. At the end of training, therapists complete an online questionnaire on satisfaction, confidence, implementation intentions, and potential barriers to SARAH implementation. At 6-month follow-up, we are collecting implementation, perceived usefulness, and intentions to continue using the programme. We are also conducting interviews to explore therapists' experiences of implementing or not implementing the programme.

Results: As of 29 September 2018, iSARAH has 813 users and 451 therapists had completed the training. Seventy percent of completers were occupational therapists and 30% were physiotherapists.

Following the training, 378 therapists (84%) reported being confident to deliver the programme. 382 therapists (85%) intended to implement it. 410 therapists (91%) reported being very or extremely satisfied with the training. Potential barriers to implementation were lack of time, not seeing patients with RA, and lack of exercise equipment.

84 therapists have provided follow-up data so far. Of those, 56 therapists (67%) had implemented the programme to between 1 and 15 patients per month. They found the programme clinically useful, rated patient satisfaction as high, and would continue to use the programme. Reasons for not implementing were lack of appropriate patients, heavy caseload, or providing alternative exercise programmes.

Results will be updated for IFSHT 2019.

Conclusions: iSARAH has been successful in training NHS therapists to implement the SARAH programme in practice.

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