

Medical Update Memo

July 7, 2008

Effectiveness of Rehabilitation Intervention in Persons with Multiple Sclerosis: A randomized controlled trial

SUMMARY

Researchers from the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Melbourne, Australia have shown that an individualized rehabilitation program reduces disability in persons with MS compared to no intervention. This work by Khan F, Pallant JF, Brand C, and Kilpatrick TJ has been published in *J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry*. 2008 Jun 5. [Epub ahead of print]

Details

A randomized, controlled study carried out over 12 months assessed the effectiveness of rehabilitation in persons with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) in an Australian community cohort. 101 patients with definite MS were recruited. The group was randomized to either a treatment group (n=49) for individualized rehabilitation program, or to a control waitlist group (n=52). A variety of outcome measurements were used to assess progress. Assessments were done at study entry and at 12 months.

Analysis of data from 98 patients (treatment n=48, control n=50) showed reduced disability in the treatment group, with statistically significant differences in some of the post-treatment scores for the two groups ($p < .001$). In the treated group 70.8% improved, compared with 13% of the controls. Significantly more patients in the control group deteriorated over the study period (58.7% versus 16.7%: $p < .001$).

Conclusion: An individualized rehabilitation program reduces disability in persons with MS compared to no intervention. The impact of rehabilitation on Quality of Life needs further evaluation. More information on effectiveness of the various components of the multidisciplinary rehabilitation programs is now needed.

With information from the Multiple Sclerosis International Federation

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