



Results from the **ACT NoW** study

Easy access version

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What is this book?

This is a **short** final report from 'the ACT NoW study'.

- It is written **for people with stroke**.
- It tells you **most of the points**, but in less detail.
- It is **for anyone with difficulty** reading or understanding.

Why have I received it?

You, or your family, **kindly took part** in the study.

- Or you **helped us** to plan and run it
- Or you **wanted to receive** these results
- The study included people who had their stroke **several years ago**
- We express **our sympathies** to anyone who has since been bereaved

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Summary

The ACT NoW study found that ...

- **Many people** have communication problems after a stroke



- Communication **improves** over time



- People with stroke felt that contact (with **therapists or visitors**) helped their **confidence**



- Early speech therapy **is not better** than seeing a visitor



- Cost effectiveness is **unclear**



What was the ACT NoW study?

ACT NoW was a **research project** -

Assessing the effectiveness of **C**ommunication **T**herapy
in the **N**orth **W**est



- **Around 700 people** took part
- These were people with **communication difficulties, carers and the general public**
- It was a **two part study**

Part 1: The pilot study

The pilot study ran from 2004 to 2006.

We set up a **group of people with stroke and their carers** to advise us.

We developed and tested research methods for part 2.

- Around **120 people with stroke** took part – **Thank you**
- We proved that part 2 **was possible**



Part 2: The main study

Part 2 was the **main study** (2006 – 2010).

It took place at **12 hospitals**.

We needed to answer 3 different questions:

1. Does early **speech therapy** improve **communication** more than time with a **visitor**?
2. What do patients and carers **like or not like** about early **therapy** or early support from a **visitor**?
3. Is speech therapy **cost effective**?

Question 1: What we did

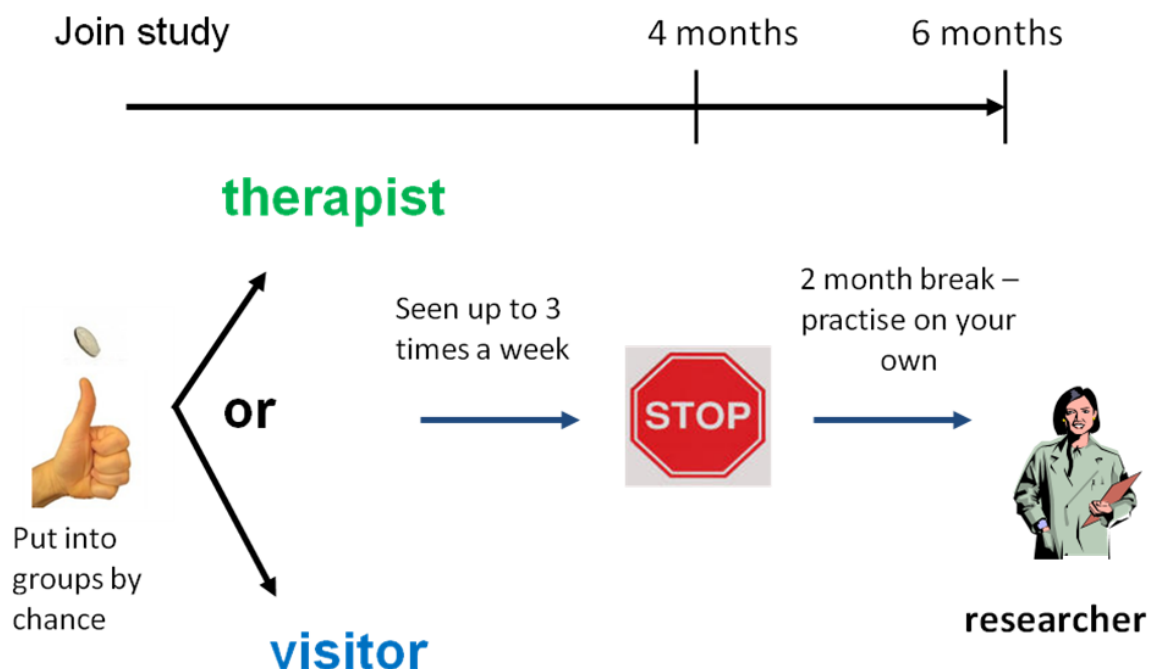
Does early **speech therapy** improve **communication** more than time with a **visitor**?

170 **people with stroke** and 135 **carers** took part.

Half saw a **therapist** and half saw a **visitor**.

Then we tested their communication.

This is **what happened** when somebody joined the study:



The therapist

Qualified **speech and language therapists** did:

- therapy with patients
- included carers
- worked with other staff



The visitor

spent **time** with patients but **no speech therapy**

- conversation
- games television and music
- manicures
- time and attention...



What did the researcher do?

Assessed patients and carers after six months.

Question 1: What we found

Does early **speech therapy** improve **communication** more than time with a **visitor**?

Answer: **No**

- People's **communication improved** in the study
- BUT
- By **similar amounts** for **therapist** or **visitors**
 - So **early speech therapy** is not better than **time and attention** from a **visitor**.

Question 2: What we did

What do patients and carers **like or not like** about early **therapy** or early support from a **visitor**?

22 people with stroke and **10 carers** took part in **interviews**.

We did these interviews to find out:

- people's **own stories** in more detail
- did seeing a **therapist** or **visitor help** them?
- **how** did it make a difference?
- **what is important** to them and their communication?

Question 2: What we found

What do patients and carers **like or not like** about early **therapy** or early support from a **visitor**?

They felt that early, regular visits from **therapist or visitor**:

- Improved **confidence & well-being**
- Provided an opportunity to **practise** communication
- Helped people to see they were **getting better**.



Important issues were:

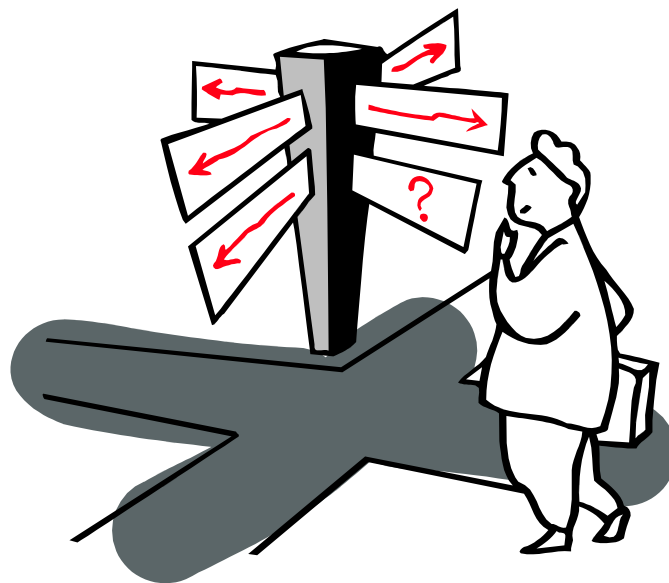
1. The **friendliness** and **personality** of the **therapist** or **visitor**
1. Being visited by someone **outside their family and friends**
2. Being visited **early and often** but at **times to suit them**.

Question 3

Is speech therapy **cost effective**?






We collected information about **costs and benefits** of seeing a **therapist** or a **visitor**.

- It was difficult to find reliable information on costs
- There were no added benefits from therapy
- So, we don't know whether early **therapy** is more or less cost effective than seeing an ACT NoW **visitor**



Summary

The ACT NoW study found that ...

- **Many people** have communication problems after a stroke 
- Communication **improves** over time 
- People with stroke felt that contact (with **therapists or visitors**) helped their **confidence** 
- Early speech therapy **is not better** than seeing a visitor 
- Cost effectiveness is **unclear** 

What could the NHS do now?

The first few months after stroke may be **too early** for Speech and Language Therapy.

The NHS could reorganise services for:

- **Early support** from less qualified staff
- Experienced speech therapist **later on**

Future research should evaluate:

- Reorganised **early** services
- Therapy for people with **long term problems**
- Therapy for people **without English** as a first language
- **Training carers** to communicate

How can I find out more?

To read the detailed scientific reports go to:

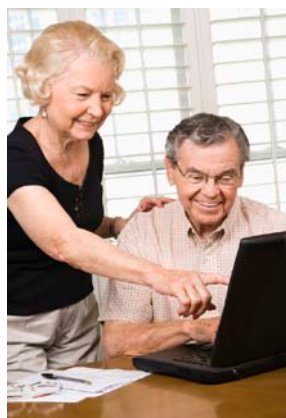
<http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/bmj.e4407>

<http://cre.sagepub.com/content/early/2012/07/25/0269215512450042.full>

<http://www.hta.ac.uk/1390>

or our website

<http://www.psych-sci.manchester.ac.uk/actnow/>



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