

CSP2023: 409 The role of physiotherapy within the community based Sheffield Lymphoedema and Ambulatory Wound Care Service: a service improvement project [abstract only]

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The role of physiotherapy within the community based Sheffield Lymphoedema and Ambulatory Wound Care Service: a service improvement project.

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General abstract data

Preferred presentation location: England - 1st of November

Theme & Methodology: Essential Rehabilitation - service evaluation & improvement

Please explain how your work fits with the conference theme you have chosen Exercise is a key treatment for patients with lymphoedema and lower limb wounds yet there is no physiotherapy provision within the Lymphoedema and Ambulatory Wound Care Service at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Trust. This project aimed to scope the role of physiotherapy within the service to improve patient outcomes.

Abstract text (maximum 500 words)

Purpose:

Exercise is a key pillar of treatment for patients with lymphoedema and lower limb wounds. According to Public Health England 61% of people with long term conditions wish to be more active but a barrier to improving their physical health is a lack of knowledge around which exercises are helpful for their condition. Despite evidence suggesting that exercise is beneficial, there is no physiotherapy provision within the Lymphoedema and Ambulatory Wound Care Service (AWC) at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Trust.

This student-led service improvement project aimed to scope the role of physiotherapy within the service, explore patient resources and make research informed recommendations.

Methods:

A review of the literature was conducted. Semi structured interviews were undertaken with patients, and nursing staff within the service. Interviews were analysed and emerging themes identified. Patient profiling was conducted and current exercise resources for patients explored. A cost benefit analysis of options was performed.

Results:

A review of the evidence suggested that exercise is a key treatment for lower limb lymphoedema and patients with lower limb wounds and that recommended exercises for these two patient groups were the same. It also suggested that for head, neck and upper limb lymphoedema specific neck and shoulder exercises should be completed alongside all other management.

Key themes from the interviews were a lack of knowledge and understanding by the nursing staff related to exercise as a form of treatment and the benefits to staff and patients of working with a physiotherapist.

Patient profiling found that many patients had complex comorbidities with the most prevalent being obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and current or previous cancer.

56% of patients with lymphoedema and 80% of patients with lower limb wounds reported low activity levels. Within the service exercise was rarely implemented as part of the treatment plan.

Patient information exercise leaflets were available for patients but were not utilised.

Conclusion(s):

The project found that exercise is key to improving outcomes for patients with lymphoedema and lower limb wounds and should be included in the treatment plans for these patients.

Recommendations were:

1. To embed a dedicated physiotherapy resource into the service to support the specialist nursing team to advise and prescribe patient exercise programmes.
2. To educate the specialist nursing team to recognise the need for referral into specialist physiotherapy services e.g. falls prevention; MSK outpatients.
3. To optimise the use of patient information regarding exercise for all patient groups.

Impact:

This project highlighted the importance of exercise in the management of lymphoedema and lower limb wounds. Embedding exercise as routine management within the service will improve outcomes for patients.

Education of staff regarding physiotherapy referral pathways and the importance of exercise is pivotal to ensure patients have the best holistic care.

Piloting a physiotherapist within the service to evaluate the benefits of a tailored approach to exercise with this patient group is recommended.

This project was student-led by BSc Physiotherapy students on a research placement. This highlights the value of practice based learning across the four pillars of practice to services and patients.

1st Keyword: Lymphoedema and lower limb wounds

2nd Keyword: Exercise

3rd Keyword: Physiotherapy

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Ethics approval: No

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Publication

Publication: No

Member

Member: Yes

Affirmation

I have read the submission guidelines and agree to the terms above: Yes

Transfer of copyright of the symposium abstract/s presented at CSP Annual Conference 2023: Yes

Consent to publication: Yes

Other

Did you undertake this research while you, the presenter, were an undergraduate, pre-registration student at a CSP accredited physiotherapy programme, and graduated in 2022 or are due to graduate in 2023?: No

Do you consent for your abstract presentation (slides and/or poster) to be published on the CSP Annual Conference 2023 websites?: Yes

Do you consent to your submitted abstract being published by Elsevier as part of a special post conference supplement in the CSP journal Physiotherapy?: Yes

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