Recovery of the upper limb after stroke: a survey of stroke survivors

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The findings of a “survey of stroke survivors” living in Queensland will be presented. The purpose of this study is to determine factors, other than medical diagnosis and co-morbidities that influence recovery of the upper limb after stroke. Comparison is made between stroke survivors who have had a good recovery and those who have not. The experience of stroke survivors from rural and remote areas where resources are scarce is also compared with stroke survivors who reside in a metropolitan area where resources are more readily available.

The first stage of the study involved development of a survey questionnaire. To determine the information required, and the language to be used in the survey, a series of focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted with stroke survivors. Following analysis of this data, a survey questionnaire was designed and piloted with stroke survivors. The second stage of the study involved administration of the survey, using a postal method, to stroke survivors living in metropolitan, rural and remote locations of Queensland.

This study is the first stage in a larger research project that aims to maximise upper limb recovery after stroke with minimum resource utilisation. Results from this survey will be used in the design of a randomised controlled clinical trial of a physiotherapy intervention concentrating on upper limb function. The aim of this program will be to equip stroke survivors with the skills and knowledge to drive their own recovery. If found to be successful at significantly improving function, the intervention will be converted into a self-management package.

**PRESENTER**

**Ruth Barker** has a background in physiotherapy, education and Indigenous health. She is currently undertaking a PhD at the University of Queensland titled “Recovery of upper limb after stroke: maximising recovery with minimum resources”. Ruth’s interest and approach to this topic has been fuelled by her extensive experience working in a broad range of health services in remote, rural and metropolitan locations in New South Wales, the Northern Territory and Queensland.