

Mentoring in Acute Stroke: Evaluation of an information provision strategy for stroke survivors and carers

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	IV
ABSTRACT.....	VII
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 <i>Background to the study.....</i>	1
1.2 <i>Central Coast of NSW.....</i>	1
1.3 <i>Gosford LGA Stroke Service.....</i>	2
1.4 <i>Local support for stroke survivors and their carers.....</i>	5
1.5 <i>Outline of the thesis.....</i>	6
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 <i>Introduction.....</i>	8
2.2 <i>Needs of stroke survivors and their carers.....</i>	8
2.3 <i>Information provision research.....</i>	11
2.4 <i>Types of information provision.....</i>	12
2.5 <i>Supplemented information provision.....</i>	13
2.6 <i>Timing of information provision.....</i>	14
2.7 <i>Carers' needs.....</i>	16
2.8 <i>Mentoring.....</i>	18
2.9 <i>Conclusion.....</i>	22
CHAPTER 3: THE MENTOR PROGRAM.....	24
3.1 <i>Overview of the mentor program.....</i>	24
3.2 <i>Mentor preparation.....</i>	25
3.3 <i>Implementation of the mentor program.....</i>	27
3.4 <i>Support for the mentors.....</i>	28
3.5 <i>Matching the mentors to inpatients and carers.....</i>	29
3.6 <i>Summary.....</i>	32
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY	33
4.1 <i>Introduction.....</i>	33
4.2 <i>Overview of the paradigms of enquiry.....</i>	33
4.2.1 <i>Positivist enquiry.....</i>	34
4.2.2 <i>Interpretive, naturalistic or constructivist paradigm.....</i>	37
4.2.3 <i>Critical paradigm.....</i>	38
4.3 <i>Evaluation.....</i>	39
4.4 <i>Healthcare evaluation.....</i>	39
4.5 <i>Fourth generation analysis.....</i>	41
4.6 <i>Summary.....</i>	44
CHAPTER 5: METHOD	46
5.1 <i>Research questions.....</i>	46
5.2 <i>Study design.....</i>	47
5.3 <i>Recruitment of participants.....</i>	48
5.3.1 <i>Inpatient stroke survivors and carers.....</i>	48
5.3.2 <i>The mentors.....</i>	49
5.3.3 <i>Acute stroke team (AST).....</i>	50
5.4 <i>Reasons for not participating in the study.....</i>	50

5.5 Ethics, consent and confidentiality.....	51
5.6 Data collection	52
5.6.1 Inpatient stroke survivor and carer interviews	53
5.6.2 Mentor focus groups.....	55
5.6.3 Acute stroke team (AST) focus group.....	58
5.7 Data analysis.....	59
5.7.1 Interview data.....	59
5.7.2 Focus group data.....	60
5.7.3 Data triangulation.....	60
5.8 Trustworthiness of the study.....	62
5.9 Summary.....	64
CHAPTER 6: DATA ANALYSIS.....	65
6.1 Presentation of the analysis of interviews.....	65
6.2 Inpatient stroke survivor/carer claims	66
6.2.1 Providing hope and understanding.....	66
6.2.2 There is life after stroke.....	69
6.2.3 Easing the burden of stroke.....	71
6.3 Inpatient stroke survivor/carer concerns	74
6.3.1 Not realising the same recovery after stroke.....	75
6.3.2 Unable to provide for a carer's needs.....	76
6.3.3 Seeking more from the mentoring experience.....	77
6.4 Inpatient stroke survivor/carer issues	78
6.4.1 Participants from outside the local geographical area.....	78
6.5 Mentors' claims.....	80
6.5.1 Positivity of mentoring	80
6.5.2 Personal growth and development.....	81
6.5.3 Being part of the team	82
6.6 Mentors' concerns.....	83
6.6.1 More allied health involvement.....	83
6.6.2 Timing.....	84
6.6.3 Meeting the demands.....	84
6.6.4 Challenges of the role.....	85
6.6.5 Maintaining boundaries	85
6.6.6 Process checks.....	86
6.7 Mentors' issues.....	87
6.7.1 Parking.....	87
6.7.2 Privacy in a busy ward.....	88
6.7.3 Previous acquaintance	88
6.7.4 Wanting feedback on the patients.....	89
6.8 Acute stroke team (AST) CCI	89
6.9 Sustainable with fine tuning	90
6.9.1 Positive mood.....	90
6.9.2 Fears of increased workload not realised.....	90
6.9.3 Positive responses verbalised to AST.....	91
6.10 AST concerns.....	91
6.10.1 Greater input.....	91
6.10.2 Missed carer participation.....	92
6.10.3 Timing.....	92
6.11 AST issues.....	93
6.11.1 Reliant on a leader	93
6.12 Summary.....	94
CHAPTER 7: AGENDA.....	96
7.1 Timing and scheduling of the mentors (Yellow).....	98

7.2 Roles, responsibilities, fatigue and resources (Blue).....	99
7.3 Greater interactions between AST and the mentors (green).....	101
7.4 Summary.....	102
CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION	103
8.1 Comparison of needs of stroke survivors and their carers	103
8.2 Accommodating the needs of patients / carers in a timely fashion	104
8.3 Taking into account the views of consumers	104
8.4 Identifying specific needs of patients.....	105
8.5 Taking the time to listen	105
8.6 Timing.....	107
8.7 Carers' needs	107
8.8 Mentoring the benefits and limitations.....	109
8.9 Limitations of the study	110
8.10 Conclusion.....	112
REFERENCE LIST	115
APPENDIX 1.....	124
APPENDIX 2.....	130
APPENDIX 3.....	132
PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET.....	132

TABLES

Table 3.1 Number and length of interviews	32
Table 5.1 Numbers and reasons for exclusion from the study	50
Table 5.2 Setting of mentor visit.....	54
Table 6.2.1 Providing hope and understanding.....	69
Table 6.2.2 There is life after stroke	71
Table 6.2.3 Easing the burden of stroke.....	73
Table 6.5.1 Positivity of mentoring	81
Table 6.5.3 Contributing as part of a team	83
Table 6.5.2 Personal growth and development.....	82
Table 6.6 Concerns of the mentors.....	86
Table 6.7 Issues identified by the mentors	89
Table 6.8 Claims from the AST	91
Table 6.9 Concerns of the AST.....	93
Table 6.10 Issue of the AST.....	94
Table 7.1 Table of combined claims concerns and issues from all stakeholders	97

LIST OF DIAGRAMS

Diagram 5.1 Study design	47
Diagram 5.2 triangulation of data sources.....	61

ABSTRACT

Stroke survivors and their carers face a multitude of challenges. Literature suggests the need for new approaches to address an identified lack in the provision of information following discharge from hospital. This exploratory study evaluates the effects of a program using stroke survivors and their carers (defined as mentors) to provide information on available services and resources to current stroke in-patients and their carers in an acute setting. Mentoring has been successfully used in breast cancer, ischaemic heart disease and traumatic brain injury but an extensive literature search has found no evidence of evaluation of this form of intervention in acute stroke.

Using Fourth Generation Evaluation and mixed methods, data was collected from three stakeholder groups. Semi structured interviews were conducted with the inpatients and carers at 48hrs and 4 weeks post meeting the mentors. Data was transcribed and thematically analysed and the primary themes identified were: there is life after stroke, providing hope and understanding, and easing the burden of stroke. Focus groups (4) conducted with the mentors (3) and members of the Acute Stroke Team (1) were used to identify claims, concerns and issues. Mentors identified that the experience was beneficial for them and that they gained personal growth from the experience. The Acute Stroke Team identified positive aspects of the program and provided valuable input into the development of an agenda for future programs. This research confirms that mentoring can provide positive benefits for stroke survivors and their carers.