Implementation of a breakfast group on an intermediate neuro-rehabilitation unit: empowering patients to take a 24-hour rehabilitation approach in a purposeful setting (2022)

Sakhina Patel (Speech and Language Therapist) and Beth Steele (Rehab Assistant)
Manchester University Foundation Trust, Trafford General Hospital

BACKGROUND

- Previously on the Intermediate Neuro-Rehabilitation Unit (INRU) all patients were served breakfast at their bedside by the nursing staff with a large proportion of patients remaining in bed throughout breakfast. This resulted in patients being very passive at mealtimes and not always being optimally positioned and also increased the workload of the nurses having to prepare breakfast for up to forty patients.
- A MDT (multi-disciplinary team) led breakfast group was set up four days a week to enable patients to implement therapy goals in a functional setting enhancing their rehabilitation experience.
- Staff may fall into a repetitious routine of offering patients meals without stimulating/challenging patients and maximising their independence. Time constraints can make patients feel vulnerable as they may feel they are not able to achieve their maximum potential and encouraging patients to eat at bedsides or in bed may contribute to pyjama paralysis. Breakfast group is allocated 2 hours which permits staff to devote time to the activity and the patients. Patients consider meals with other patients a social activity and *"a place to talk and help each other"* whilst working on their individual short-term goals. Taking an indirect approach to therapy within a group setting benefits staff as well as patients. Resilience and adaptability are promoted, and patients feel more motivated working on goals with other patients as it gives them a sense of solidarity. Breakfast group aims to empower patients to aim for independence.

AIMS

Rehabilitation Assistants, Speech & Language Therapists and Activity Co-ordinators worked collaboratively with the wider MDT to achieve patient goals. Example goals included; able to butter toast; able to choose appropriate dietary options based on swallow guidelines; optimising positioning; self-feeding; social communication; multitasking; increasing mood and enhancing opportunities for independence.

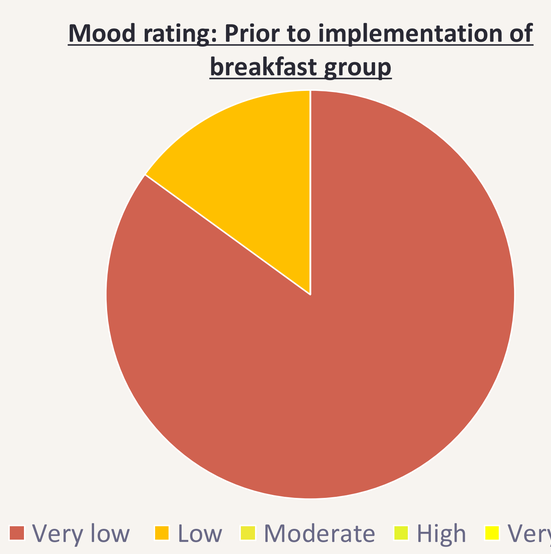
METHODS

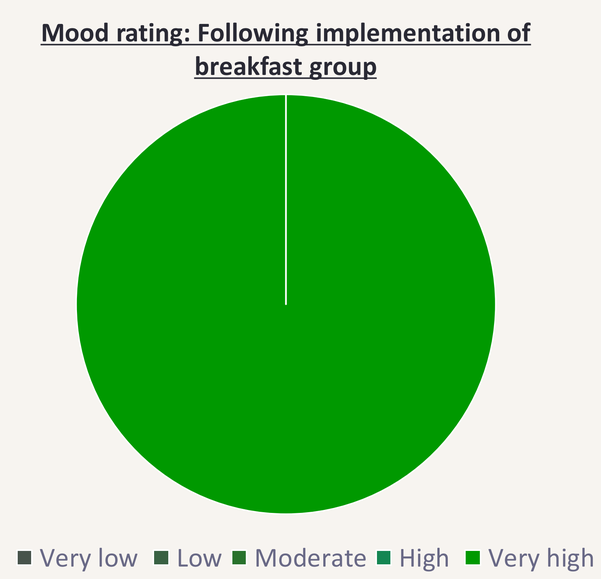
All patients were given the option to attend breakfast group or have breakfast at bedside.

Outcome measures utilised were:

- A self-administered questionnaire consisting of a series of open ended questions
- Mood scales were also completed before and after the commencement of the group.

RESULTS





Patient feedback

- "I don't eat if there is no breakfast club"
- "Make friends"
- "It is a nicer atmosphere"
- "It is gloomy at bedside and 10 times better at breakfast club"
- "Thankyou, is makes me get up each morning"
- "Helped conversation skills"
- "Helps with learning to use skills with opposite limbs"
- "Speech improvement"
- "It is better in breakfast club because you meet different people"

CONCLUSION AND IMPACT

Fruit loaf & crumpets, that's one way to get anyone out of bed! Patients now queue at 8:00am sharp ready for breakfast group.

Breakfast group has assisted with patient education, assisting patients with real life tasks, improving their well-being, promoting independence and achieving their rehabilitation goals. The aim is to continue breakfast club, increase the number of days it is held and explore avenues to extend groups to more mealtimes further promoting the 24hour rehabilitation approach.

Breakfast group places patients' well-being at the forefront promoting independence and achievement of goals. The team strive to preserve patients' dignity allowing them the independence they desire. Creating a naturalistic environment minimises patients' feelings of being institutionalised. Patients value the social aspect of the group as it offers a sense of belonging and a 'place to chat and help each other' reinforcing unity and spirit. Moreover, to make mealtimes more enjoyable, patients' have the choice and freedom to make their breakfast in the way they would like it and the staff have the resources and time to facilitate this. Breakfast group can enable a positive start to the day for all patients.

Breakfast group benefits the wider MDT alongside patients.

- Nursing staff: Reduces pressure for nursing staff as patients can make their own breakfast. The team can easily tailor and meet specific patient needs/desires.
- Speech and Language Therapists: Implement diet recommendations with a more varied food menu. A group setting provides opportunity to implement cognitive communication goals in functional conversations.
- Physiotherapists: Handover positioning and transferring and mobility techniques for patients to practice in a functional setting.
- Occupational Therapists: Practise use of equipment including adapted cutlery and carry over of cognitive skills in function.
- Activity Co-ordinators and Rehabilitation Assistants: Opportunity for MDT working e.g. handing over strategies, techniques and resources which they are able to carry over on weekends, providing maximum opportunity for a 24 hour rehabilitation approach.

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