Introduction

- Roughly 795,000-800,000 strokes occur every year in the United States alone, making it the fifth most common cause of mortality and a leading cause of serious disability (Gutierrez & Esenwa, 2015; Tsao et al., 2012).
- The practice of providing education to stroke patients and their families is vital because it helps combat the medical implications that result from a stroke and is among the primary strategies targeted at reducing recurrent episodes and new cases (Maniva et al., 2018).
- Despite evidence regarding the benefits attributed to post-stroke patient education, the incidence of stroke is increasingly and alarmingly high.
- The purpose of this research project was to explore post-stroke patients’ perceptions of information that was most valuable to receive during the acute phase of recovery, information that was overlooked, but needed, and implications of this information on their health and recovery.
- This research project was conducted in collaboration with UAB’s Spain Rehabilitation Center (SRC).

Methods

- This qualitative study utilized in-depth interviews with individuals with stroke regarding their experiences in acute rehabilitation and their perceptions of post-stroke patient education.
- Interviews were ~25-30 minutes long and examined participants’ perceptions of the most valuable information received, information not received but needed, and what they would change about the education procedure that was delivered in the acute phase.
- Participants had to be 18 years or older, had experienced one or more strokes at least 6 months prior to enrolling in the study, had no expressive or comprehensive difficulties, and received inpatient rehabilitation.
- Participants were recruited through databases of subjects who participated in previous studies conducted by the faculty mentor of this project, referrals from occupational therapists and case managers of UAB’s SRC, and stroke support/community groups.
- If eligible, participants were screened via phone call and interviewed via HIPAA compliant Zoom that was established.
- A sample of 6 participants were interviewed and included in the study.

Results

- Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Sample size (N=6)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>67 / 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>Male / Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stroke Type</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ischemic / Hemorrhagic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inpatient Care</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 / 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Needed Education</td>
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<td>4 / 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>67 / 33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Needed Education</td>
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- Figure 1 represents the two primary, seven secondary, and five tertiary codes that were identified from interview responses.

Discussion

- Results of this study are supported by existing literature demonstrating the need for improvement in the practice of implementing post-stroke education.
- Perceptions of education that would have been valuable to receive varied based on priorities, the severity and ramifications of the stroke, and perceived needs during acute care.
- Variations in format preferences emphasize the importance of providers tailoring education procedures to meet the learning needs of the patient.
- Results revealed preferences for continuous education initiated by providers, such as a therapist to spending more time with therapists during sessions, which led to feeling more comfortable and being able to ask more questions.

Discussion continued

- Stroke survivors in the acute phase of recovery often feel overwhelmed following a stroke, and understanding education can be challenging or even impossible, resulting in the belief or feeling that they did not receive it at all.
- While it is vital to still include patients in the education process to prevent feelings of fear and dismissal, including caregivers and family members is important to ensure information retention and aver the feeling of not receiving enough.
- This study provides occupational therapists and other healthcare providers insight to the gaps that exist between healthcare professionals’ understanding of effective post-stroke education versus their actual implementation of the education and alternately more effective strategies to deliver education.
- Results of this study yield substantial implications for tailoring education to develop higher-quality post-stroke patient education that better promotes health management and recovery.

References

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