Evaluation of a rolling rehabilitation programme for patients with non-specific low back pain in primary care: an observational cohort study

Kathleen Arden1; Francis Fatoye2; Gillian Yeowell2

1Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust 2Manchester Metropolitan University

INTRODUCTION

Low back pain (LBP) is the leading cause of disability worldwide [1]. Exercise programmes such as the back rehabilitation programme (BRP) are effective for the management of patients with non-specific low back pain (NSLBP). However, the BRP has been associated with long waiting times, poor attendance and high attrition rates [2].

In an attempt to improve attendance, the format of the BRP was changed to a continual rolling programme. The number of sessions and duration of each session was reduced. In addition, the exercise element was individualised to the patient’s needs. To date, the effectiveness of the rolling programme has not been investigated.

RESULTS

• 88% of patients had an improved BQ score post intervention
• 56% had a post BRP BQ score change of ≥47% indicating a clinically significant improvement
• The median pre/baseline BQ score was 37 and the median post score was 14 (Figure 1)
• 95% had an improved sit to stand test
• 88% had an improved step test
• 95% had an improved walk test
• All results were statistically significant (p < 0.0001)
• 62 patients attended the rolling BRP in 2014 and 41 (66%) patients completed, whereas 36 patients attended the standard sequential BRP and 12 (33%) completed

Figure 1. Box and whisker plot of pre and post BRP scores

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This study suggests that the continual rolling BRP was effective in improving patient reported outcomes and fitness. The rolling format also appears to enhance attendance. As such, the rolling BRP should be considered by practitioners as an effective management strategy when treating patients with NSLBP.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Contact details for correspondence
Kathleen.arden@bridgewater.nhs.uk

REFERENCES