A study into the effectiveness of a postural care education programme

Welcome to this second edition of the UKC–PostCarD study newsletter (Understanding Knowledge & Confidence in daytime Postural Care for Children with a Disability). In this edition we update you on the progress of the study, introduce a new member of the research team and describe our plans for the future. The study is funded by an award from the NIHR Research for Patient Benefit scheme (Ref: PB-PG-0110-21045).

Research Update

Since the last edition of the newsletter the research study has moved forward significantly. We have established links with our therapy teams in Surrey (Virgin Care), Sussex (Sussex Community Health NHS Trust) and Kent (Kent Community Health NHS Trust). We now have an enthusiastic group of occupational therapists and physiotherapists from these teams who are running the 2 hour training workshops and providing the 6 week follow on support for teachers and parents in postural care at home and school.

All therapists have attended a ‘train the trainer’ event run in their localities. They have been provided with a training manual and a presentation designed to guide them in running the workshops and providing the follow on support to parents and teachers.

The training manual draws on research in psychology that highlights the importance of providing support alongside information in order to instill confidence. Following the workshop therapists will offer parents and teachers opportunities to carry out postural care tasks with support. Parents and teachers can also observe others carrying out tasks successfully while receiving encouragement and supportive feedback and there are opportunities for them to discuss any worries or concerns they may have. Seven workshops have now been delivered in the three localities and the therapy teams are now providing the follow on support.

Preliminary feedback from participants and the therapists running the workshops has been positive, with parents and school staff reporting that the training has been beneficial.

We will be offering the opportunity for all participants to provide formal feedback through interviews and focus groups. This important element of the study will provide an opportunity for all those who have participated to share experiences and opinions about the education programme.

The recommendations from these focus groups will be vital in establishing whether the training and follow on support has been valued by parents and teachers and will inform decisions about how this approach can be shared with others in the future.
People news

Nicola Abbott

We are pleased to welcome a new member of our research team - Nicola Abbott joined the postural care research team as a Research Fellow based at Canterbury Christ Church University in November. Nicola will be running the focus groups we are planning with parents, teachers, therapists and children. Nicola's background is in Developmental Social Psychology. Her interest in the study was aroused by the applied nature of the study. “This study has enabled me to draw on my previous knowledge and skills, but in a completely new, and stimulating field. Children with disabilities face numerous barriers in everyday life and I am particularly keen to be involved in a study that aims to increase their participation and engagement”. Nicola can be contacted via email nicola.abbott@canterbury.ac.uk

Charmian Cowie

Many of you will receive this newsletter from our Administrator, Charmian Cowie. Charmian is an essential member of our team. Charmian is a first point of contact for any information about the study. charmian.cowie@canterbury.ac.uk

Outcome measure

Results from the development of the outcome measure, designed specifically for this study and reported on in our previous newsletter, have now been finalised and the Understanding Knowledge & Confidence in Postural Care measure (UKC-PC) is now being used to evaluate the education programme. The outcome measure is administered to participants prior to and at the conclusion of the education programme. This will help us establish whether there is a change in parents’ and teachers’ knowledge and understanding of postural care and their confidence in this approach.

Further developments

The research team intend to build on our successful collaboration between parents of disabled children, teachers and therapists when planning further research. We are pleased to announce that we have received a £33,000 research grant from East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust which will enable the research team to continue to undertake research that investigates the support needs of disabled children and their families in East Kent.

Conferences

The research team have presented at the following:

• British Psychological Society - Division of Health Psychology, Liverpool (September 2012).
• Posture & Mobility Group National Training Event, Warwick (April 2012).
• Children and Young Peoples Specialist Section (College of Occupational Therapists) South East Conference, Medway (July 2012).

Sarah Hotham & Dr. Eve Hutton have been invited to present a research paper at this year’s, College of Occupational Therapists 37th Annual Conference to be held in Glasgow in July. Other national and international conference presentations are planned and we intend to present our research findings at events where parents, teachers and therapists can attend as our study concludes.

Time line of project

January 2013 - April 2013: Data collection at all three sites
March 2013 - April 2013: Focus groups
April 2013 – June 2013: Data analysis and dissemination

Targets over the next six months

The concluding months of the study will focus on delivering the workshops and providing the follow up support to parents and teachers. As localities complete this work will start to gather the interview and focus group data. We anticipate that we will be able to report some preliminary findings of the research in the next edition of the newsletter.

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