

Appendix: Glossary of Stroke terms

A

ACE inhibitors: Angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors: a group of medicines often used to treat high blood pressure by blocking the activity of this enzyme and thereby encouraging the blood vessels to dilate.

Acupuncture: A traditional Chinese system of healing in which symptoms are relieved by having thin metal needles inserted into selected points beneath the skin. The needles may be stimulated either by rotation or by an electric current and are then removed.

Aphasia: Inability to use language. It can either be a problem understanding language (receptive) or speaking it (expressive). People are often affected by both types.

Auditory feedback: Information about your performance during a movement (for example, a beep or a spoken word when you achieve a particular action).

B

Botox (botulinum toxin): A highly toxic protein, sometimes used in minute amounts as a muscle relaxant in cases of painful spasm. (See: Spasticity).

C

Cognition: The function of processing information and applying knowledge. Functions include processes requiring thought and intelligence, such as attention, perception, learning, memory, comprehension, judgment and decision making.

Central post-stroke pain (also known as neuropathic): This may start at the time of the stroke but usually occurs several months later. Because the pain is a nerve pain it is often described as shooting, burning or stabbing. The pain is felt in the part of the body affected by the stroke.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT): Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a type of therapy that aims to help the individual manage their problems by changing how they think and act.

Contenance: Automatic control of bladder and bowel function. Loss of one or both (incontinence) may happen for a time after stroke.

Appendix: Glossary of Stroke terms

Conversation partner training: A conversation partner scheme is a system of supporting isolated people with aphasia in their own homes, by training volunteers without aphasia to offer 'supported conversation'.

D

Dysarthria: Slurred speech arising from muscle weakness, in which the pronunciation is unclear although the meaning of what is said is properly expressed.

Dyspraxia: Difficulty in controlling and coordinating movements or carrying out complex tasks when requested, caused by damage to the part of the brain responsible for voluntary movement and not by paralysis of the muscles or lack of comprehension. Can affect sequencing (ability to do things in logical order, to achieve a goal) and even speech.

E

Early supported discharge: Early supported discharge services are provided by teams of therapists, nurses and doctors. They aim to allow stroke patients to return home from hospital earlier than usual and receive more rehabilitation at home.

Electrical stimulation: Electronic muscle stimulation, or EMS, is the practice of stimulating specific muscles through electric current.

Electrofacial stimulation: The electrical stimulation of facial muscles for the treatment of facial paralysis.

Emotional lability: A state of emotional disinhibition, often temporary, which is brought on by stroke or other forms of damage to the brain. Emotional reactions and their expression are exaggerated and uncontrolled, e.g. crying and laughing easily and sometimes inappropriately.

F

Functional electrical stimulation (FES): The principle of FES is to replace the nerve impulses to the muscles that are interrupted by damage to the brain or spinal cord, with small electrical signals. Used in devices such as the Odstock dropped foot stimulator.

G

Gait: The characteristics of walking particular to an individual.

Appendix: Glossary of Stroke terms

Goal setting: The process whereby the professionals and the patient decide on the main objectives for rehabilitation.

H

Hydrotherapy: The person is immersed in warm water (around body temperature) which allows the body to float and strengthens the power in those muscles that need it. It provides gentle resistance to movement in the water for exercise and enables relaxation of the muscles. Hydrotherapy may help to re-educate muscles to take over the function of damaged ones.

I

Incontinence: Loss of control of passing urine, faeces, or both (termed "double incontinence.")

Involuntary reaction: A movement that occurs without conscious choice or effort.

N

National Stroke Strategy: The Department of Health's plan for improving services for people who have had a stroke.

Naso-gastric tube: A tube that is passed through the nose down the throat into the stomach usually to allow feeding, where a person is unconscious or has lost their swallowing reflex.

Neuropathic pain: Also known as Central Post Stroke Pain. This may start at the time of the stroke but usually occurs several months later. Because the pain is a nerve pain it is often described as shooting, burning or stabbing. The pain is felt in the part of the body affected by the stroke.

Neuro-vision technology package: Neuro-Vision Technology is an assessment and training package designed to train someone with neurological vision impairment to maximise the use of their remaining vision and to become as independent as possible.

Non-linguistic cognitive training: Non-language related 'brain-training' type exercises.

Nystagmus: Involuntary jerking of the eyes, occurring if stroke damages the part of the brain responsible for eye movements.

Appendix: Glossary of Stroke terms

O

Orthoptic: The diagnosis and treatment of a range of abnormalities that affect eye muscles, connected nerves, eye movement, vision and alignment. An orthoptist is a health professional with particular expertise in vision and eye movements.

R

Rehabilitation: The process of regaining function through active treatment, such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy.

S

Shoulder subluxation: Shoulder subluxation is a common occurrence after stroke and can be due to muscle weakness or spasticity. It is characterized by the upper arm bone (humerus) dropping out of the shoulder socket.

Spasticity: Increased muscle tone often resulting in stiffness, contractures and pain that may develop after a stroke or other type of damage to the brain or spinal cord. This usually requires regular stretching and range of motion exercises to counterbalance it.

Statins: Drugs used to lower LDL-cholesterol levels, and thereby reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Stem cell therapy: Treatment in which stem cells are used to treat specific cell types in order to repair damaged or destroyed cells or tissues.

Stroke Unit: Hospital facility for the effective management of patients with acute stroke by a multi-disciplinary team of specialists.

T

Telemedicine: The use of communication and information technologies to deliver clinical care where the individuals involved are not at the same location.

Therapeutic positioning: The positioning of a patient when nursing post-stroke to promote optimal recovery.

Thrombolysis: The use of drugs to break up a blood clot, a treatment which can be given to some patients in the acute stage of ischaemic stroke.

Appendix: Glossary of Stroke terms

Tinnitus: Tinnitus is a sound that's heard in one or both ears for which there's no external source. It is often described as a ringing, buzzing, roaring, hissing or whistling sound.

Tissue Plasminogen Activator (TPA): The drug most commonly used for thrombolysis.

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS): Magnetic current applied to an area of the brain to promote plasticity and healing.

Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA): A stroke-like event that fully recovers within 24 hours of the start of symptoms.

V

Visual inattention (neglect): Where a person fails to pay attention to their body or environment on the affected side. This more frequently affects attention to the left side. A person with neglect may no longer wash that side of their face and may experience difficulty navigating even in familiar places.

Visual feedback: Information about your performance during a movement e.g. a light or information on a computer screen to tell you about the success of an action you have performed.

Visual field: The area which can be seen by an individual when looking straight ahead without moving the eyes or gaze.