

LEAP-MS: Co-designing and testing a web-based Life-style, Exercise and Activity intervention for People with Progressive Multiple Sclerosis

Background

People with advanced Multiple Sclerosis often struggle to access appropriate and inclusive support for regular physical activity.

We co-designed the Lifestyle, Exercise and Activity Package (LEAP-MS) intervention (www.leapms.org) - a web-based physical activity intervention made up of:

- 1) web-based coaching with physiotherapists using self-management support strategies to promote physical activity

*What have you managed to do since I last saw you?
What would you like to be doing more of?
Give it a go!
Who could support you with that?*

*What's important to you right now?
How did that make you feel?
What has worked before?
How would you normally tackle this?
Other people have found it useful to...*

- 2) an interactive web-based platform including a physical activity information suite, an activity selection and planning tool and a participant-physiotherapist messaging system.



Through our 'Activity Suite' - an extensive library of activities, people with MS are able to build their own bespoke programme of activity, set goals, log and monitor their progress. Uniquely, the LEAP MS intervention has a paired account function in which people with MS can be paired with their NHS physiotherapist to respond to participants' requests and to view participant activity and goal setting.

Methods

We tested the LEAP-MS intervention in a feasibility study with 21 individuals with primary or secondary progressive MS with an Expanded Disability Status Scale score between 6 and 8 over a period of 12 weeks using an entirely remote (online) evaluation.

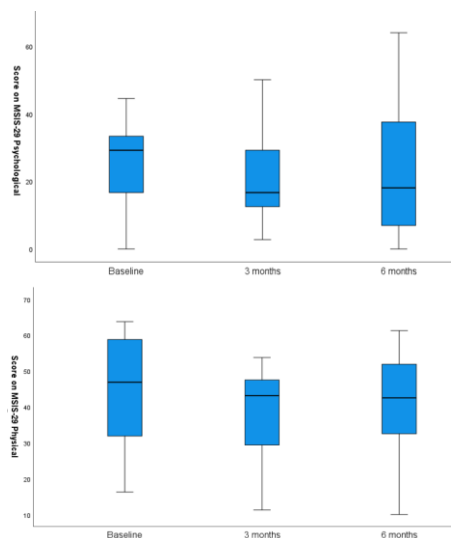
Participants used the platform to register, complete eligibility forms, consent, baseline and follow-up measures and to access the intervention. Physiotherapists had access and editing permissions to review goals and activities and to keep records.

Assessments included the MS Impact Scale (MSIS-29) and measures reflecting fatigue, participation in daily living and health-related quality of life at baseline, three and six months.

Eighteen participants and seven intervention physiotherapists were interviewed about their experiences of using the intervention at 3 months.

Results

Twenty-one participants were recruited; 76% completed both follow-up assessments. The intervention achieved set fidelity criteria.



At 3 months 75% of participants reported improvements in their day-to-day activities as well as their mood and fatigue levels. MSIS-29 physical scores improved by an average of eight points (95% CI -12.6 to -3.3). Improvements were also seen in MSIS-29 psychological scores and fatigue. Some improvements were maintained at six months. All but one participant found the intervention to be usable.



The intervention was also deemed acceptable to all intervention physiotherapists.

Conclusion

LEAP-MS provided people with advanced MS and physiotherapists with a new way of working in partnership. Both groups developed valuable skills in supported self-management by focusing on enhancing physical activity to support overall wellbeing.

The LEAP-MS intervention is feasible and associated with perceived benefits. Progression to a full effectiveness trial is warranted.



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