

Fatigue Management in MS: Putting the evidence into practice

Background and Aim:

- Fatigue remains one of the most commonly reported, and debilitating symptoms in MS, impacting significantly on quality of life (Thomas et al. 2010, Tepavcevic, 2014).
- My assignment from the MS Trust Professional Development Module was to investigate how the fatigue management programme we currently offer could be further developed.
- The Walton Centre offers an evidence based standardised fatigue management programme (FACETS) with a 3 month follow up session, using FMSQ.
- The literature highlighted an increase in fatigue self-efficacy on completing the programme, but this reduced once the programme had finished. Before initiating a further follow up an action plan was developed to scrutinise the potential benefits of this from a patient perspective.

The Action Plan

Attend MS Trust Professional Development module, 2018
Decide on the topic for the assignment. What would be beneficial for our patients?

Literature search and review of evidence for assignment
The evidence shows a decline in fatigue self efficacy after the fatigue management programme has ended.

Gather patient feedback from patient questionnaire
Patients were asked about whether they felt further follow up would be beneficial, timescale and consent to participate in the focus group – see quotes.

Review job plans
Face to face time with patients, administration time to set up the sessions, and consider skill mix of staff needed.

Set up focus groups
Plan to run 3 focus groups. Patients will be invited to “opt in” to this to remain in line with Trust Information Governance policy.

Tailoring the sessions
Analyse feedback from the focus groups to create a trial follow up session.

Trial session
Monitor using qualitative and quantitative measures. Outcome measures previously used for FACETS: WHO-QoI Bref, MSIS-29, MS-FSE, NFI-MS (Thomas et al, 2013) and freehand evaluation form.

“...The support received from members of the group has been invaluable and had a positive impact on self-esteem” (December 2018)

“...it is a good reminder/encouragement to keep on using the techniques we learned about. If health has been poor the techniques we learned may fall to the wayside and they are REALLY important to help with our levels of fatigue and mindset towards our health.” (January 2019)

“... I find that attending the sessions can improve my level of motivation to keep on pursuing objectives.” (May 2019)

“...This session has ‘pulled me back’ and has reaffirmed that I am successfully using many of the techniques learned. I have felt refreshed by today.” (August 2019)

Conclusion:

- Academic assignment can lead to real life service development using current evidence.
- Outcomes collected at The Walton Centre concur with published evidence.
- The action plan necessary for the Masters component of the assignment has ensured a structured path to service development.
- The Occupational Therapists are in the process of setting up the patient focus groups to scope the service development and to continue with the action plan.