A Very Early Rehabilitation Trial after stroke (AVERT): a Phase III, multicentre, randomised controlled trial

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Declared competing interests of authors: Peter Langhorne received funding from the National Institute for Health Research; National Health Medical Research Council Australia; Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland; the Stroke Association, UK; and Chest Heart and Stroke Association of Northern Ireland to complete this trial. Peter Langhorne is a member of Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Clinical Trials Board. Olivia Wu is a member of HTA Evidence Synthesis Board and Systematic Review Programme Advisory Group. Helen Rodgers reports grants from Newcastle University during the tenure of this grant. Julie Bernhardt reports grants from National Health and Medical Research Council Australia; NIHR; Singapore Health, Singapore; Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland, UK; Chest Heart and Stroke Association of Northern Ireland; Stroke Association, UK, during the conduct of the study.

Published September 2017
DOI: 10.3310/hta21540

Plain English summary

The AVERT RCT
Health Technology Assessment 2017; Vol. 21: No. 54
DOI: 10.3310/hta21540

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Plain English summary

Despite the many recent improvements in stroke care, it is not clear which components are the most important. Early active rehabilitation (mobilisation) represents a simple treatment that could be provided for the majority of people with a stroke.

This clinical trial included people admitted to hospital with a stroke in 56 hospitals in five countries (UK, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore). Those who agreed to participate were assigned at random to either usual care (UC) in the stroke unit or very early mobilisation (VEM) (assisted to get out of bed within 24 hours of the first sign of stroke). This continued frequently for the first 14 days or until discharge from the stroke unit. All participants were followed up wherever they were living 3 months and 12 months later. A trained health-care worker gathered information about their ability to move about, their ability to carry out everyday activities, their mood, their quality of life and any costs associated with their care.

A total of 2104 participants took part in the trial. At 3 months, fewer participants in the VEM group were independent in everyday activities ($n = 480, 46\%$) than in the UC group ($n = 525, 50\%$). There were no significant differences in any of the other trial measures. Further analysis indicated that a good recovery might be best achieved with short bursts of mobilisation activity repeated regularly.

Using the information from this study, we are planning a new trial to better understand how early stroke rehabilitation can be delivered to maximise every patient’s recovery.
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This report
The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the HTA programme as project number 12/01/16. The contractual start date was in August 2013. The draft report began editorial review in August 2016 and was accepted for publication in July 2017. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The HTA editors and publisher have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors’ report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the draft document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

This report presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The views and opinions expressed by authors in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the HTA programme or the Department of Health. If there are verbatim quotations included in this publication the views and opinions expressed by the interviewees are those of the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect those of the authors, those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the HTA programme or the Department of Health.

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