A self-management programme to reduce falls and improve safe mobility in people with secondary progressive MS: the BRiMS feasibility RCT

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Declared competing interests of authors: Paul Ewings is a member of the National Institute for Health Research Health Technology Assessment Clinical Evaluation and Trials Board.

Published June 2019
DOI: 10.3310/hta23270
Plain English summary

The BRiMS feasibility RCT
Health Technology Assessment 2019; Vol. 23: No. 27
DOI: 10.3310/hta23270

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Plain English summary

People with secondary progressive multiple sclerosis (SPMS) often have problems with walking and balance, which lead them to fall. Undertaking exercise and learning about falls prevention could help reduce injury risk and improve mobility.

We developed a mobility, balance and falls programme called Balance Right in MS (BRiMS). Before testing its effectiveness in a large-scale trial, we needed to conduct a small-scale version of the trial.

We asked people with SPMS who had balance and mobility problems to be assigned by chance to undertake the BRiMS programme plus their usual care, or to continue with usual care only.

Questionnaires were used to ask people about their mobility, falls and quality of life, and we measured their balance and activity levels. We interviewed participants about BRiMS and being in the trial, and collected information about costs.

Fifty-six people entered the trial from three areas of the south-west and from Ayrshire. At completion of the study we were able to review 44 people. The key measures were completed by 98% of those we assessed, but only around half (62%) of the diaries detailing falls were returned. As this was a feasibility trial, the numbers were too small for us to look at differences between the groups.

Participants liked the BRiMS programme; some did a lot of exercise and learning activities, but most did not manage the amount we asked them to do. People reported feeling a little overwhelmed by the educational content of BRiMS, and that this should be reduced in future. They told us that they felt that their balance had improved and that they fell less frequently after the BRiMS programme.

Our assessment of the trial methods we used showed that it would be possible to conduct a full-scale trial using this design, but that we need to adapt the BRiMS programme further to make it more user-friendly.
Health Technology Assessment

ISSN 1366-5278 (Print)
ISSN 2046-4924 (Online)
Impact factor: 4.513

Health Technology Assessment is indexed in MEDLINE, CINAHL, EMBASE, The Cochrane Library and the Clarivate Analytics Science Citation Index.

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**This report**

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the HTA programme as project number 14/176/12. The contractual start date was in September 2016. The draft report began editorial review in May 2018 and was accepted for publication in October 2018. 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 and Social Care. 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 and Social Care.

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