



# Consumer views on occupational therapist-led discharge planning programs: a qualitative descriptive study

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## **Acknowledgement of Country**

I acknowledge the Wurrundjeri clans of the Kulin Nation, the custodians of the lands and waters, and I pay my respects to Elders, past, present and emerging.

# Background



- Stroke is a leading cause of adult disability worldwide<sup>1,2</sup>
- First-time stroke is associated with particular challenges and occupational adaptation<sup>3</sup>
- Most individuals return home after their stroke<sup>4,5</sup>

Discharge is a critical point of **risk** and **opportunity**

- International trends in shorter hospital stays = greater complexity and responsibility on carers<sup>6</sup>
- Occupational therapists are integral in effective discharge planning programs

<sup>1</sup> Feigin et al., 2025 <sup>2</sup> Steinmetz et al., 2024

<sup>3</sup> Ribeiro Batista et al., 2024

<sup>4</sup> Dutta et al., 2018 <sup>5</sup> Tran et al., 2023

<sup>6</sup> O'Connor et al. 2023

# Discharge planning programs

- Occupational therapy pre-discharge home visits are used to support discharge readiness and maximise independence<sup>1</sup>
- The experiences of consumers participating in an **enhanced discharge plan** have not been fully investigated



## Research Aim

To explore the experiences and perspectives of stroke survivors and carers of an occupational therapy led enhanced discharge planning program

<sup>1</sup> Drummond et al., 2013

# Methods



## Design

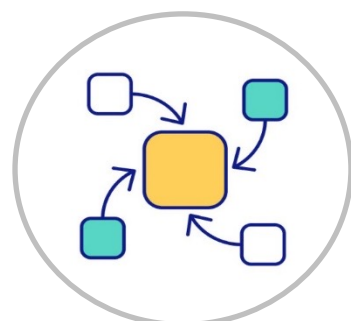
Qualitative Descriptive Design  
Semi-structured in-depth interviews



## Participants

Stroke survivors and carers involved in a study of enhanced home visit discharge planning

- > 45 years
- First time stroke
- No significant previous disability (pre-stroke mRS score 0-2)



## Analysis

An inductive, six-phase analysis process using reflexive thematic analysis<sup>1</sup>  
Four researchers involved

# Findings

Participant characteristics, n = 31



Stroke patient characteristics (n=16)			Carer characteristics (n= 15)		
<b>Sex</b>	<i>n</i>	%	<b>Sex</b>	<i>n</i>	%
Female	7	44	Female	9	60
Male	9	56	Male	6	40
<b>Social situation</b>			<b>Carer relationship</b>		
Lives alone	5	31	Partner/Spouse	12	80
Lives with support	11	69	Sister	1	7
			Daughter	1	7
			Friend	1	7
<b>Stroke severity</b>					
Mild	10	63			
Moderate - severe	6	37			

# Findings: Overview

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## *Carer Themes*

1



Instilling confidence and reassurance for the transition home

2



Comprehensive and connected care

3



Accelerating rehabilitation progress

4



The advantages of being in the home environment

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# Theme One

## Instilling confidence and reassurance for the transition home

*“This was giving me the assurance that either my husband could cope at home....this was giving me the assurance that he could do it, otherwise I would have sleepless nights probably”*



Participant 7, 74 years

*“I think we would have struggled a bit (without home visits). She would have come home, but I wouldn't have felt confident going off to work, with her showering”*



Participant 1, 62 years



## Theme Two

### Accelerating rehabilitation progress



Participant 10, 67 years

*I don't think things would have gone so well (without visits). Instead of things taking a shorter timeframe, it probably all would have gone longer, longer, and things would have taken much longer to turn around and get to a better place"*

*"I don't think it would be as advanced as he probably is now. I think that gave him a lot of improvement much quicker than what he would have had, than trying to do things by himself and figure out better ways of doing things"*



Participant 2, 70 years



## Theme Three

Comprehensive and connected care

*“Everything had been done, and was in place, so I really didn’t have to ask for anymore help”*

*“Getting a shower stool, a toilet seat, all those things, it was excellent care”*



## Theme Four

The advantages of being in-home



Participant 10, 76 years



Participant 1, 62 years



Participant 11, 67 years

*“..because she was actually in the home setting and she could see our setup, perhaps any adjustments that did or did not need doing. She could see [his] living situation, and what his interests at home were, and just really tailor everything precisely around that”*

# Implications for Practice

- Carers view pre- and post-discharge visits as important for confidence and coping
- Home visits offer not only practical value but also psychological benefits for carers
- An individualised approach to facilitate transitions from hospital to home for stroke survivors is imperative

# Questions?



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