

Case Study: At Home Stroke Assessment Using Librestream’s Onsight Mobile Collaboration System in Northwestern Ontario

Current Situation

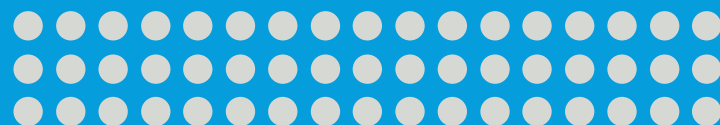
Stroke has been described as Canada’s most “forgotten disease”. It is the fourth leading cause of death in Canada with almost 60% of persons living with stroke being left with moderate to severe impairment. The burden on people living with stroke and their families is immense, with costs to the Canadian economy estimated at \$2.7 billion per year.

Currently, it is difficult to provide sufficient and equitable care to all people living with stroke in Northwestern Ontario. One of the challenges faced is that many people living with stroke are in remote communities that do not have access to onsite specialists. Often, the only option for a person living with stroke is to travel a considerable distance to see the rehabilitation professional they need. According to the Ontario Stroke System’s (OSS) Report to the Consensus Panel on the Stroke Rehabilitation System, people living with stroke need periodic reassessments with stroke care

professionals at six weeks, three months, one year and as needed. At the present time, there are very few people who receive this level of care.

The Goal

The Northwestern Ontario Regional Stroke Network at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre proposed a project to improve access to care in remote communities. They have now been awarded funding by the Ontario Stroke System – Ministry of Health & Long Term Care to utilize telemedicine to deliver stroke rehabilitation follow-up visits. The overall goal is to provide equitable access to rehabilitation reassessment for people living with stroke in rural and remote areas, particularly First Nations communities.



The Solution

To deliver equitable access to care, the project “Tele-Rehab: Improving Access to Quality Stroke Rehabilitation in Rural and Remote Communities” was born. This approach uses telemedicine technologies to provide better access to care for people living with stroke.

Study Coordinator and Physiotherapist, Kirsti Reinikka, has developed the processes necessary to facilitate rehabilitation visits from providers based at St. Joseph’s Care Group in Thunder Bay to rural and remote communities using the Ontario Telemedicine and Kuhkenah Networks (OTN and KNet). Through collaboration with Keewaytinook Okimakanak Tele-Mushkiki (KOTM), local home care workers, will visit patients in their own homes and connect them directly to stroke rehabilitation specialists using Librestream’s Onsight mobile device. Specialists will see patients and interact verbally with them to assess their progress and recommend next steps for rehabilitation. By using OTN and KNet, patients will not have to leave their home communities.

Esmé French, Physiotherapist and Regional Stroke Rehabilitation Specialist with the NWO Regional Stroke Network, states,



Ms. French continues, “The innovative use of telemedicine technology will build capacity in, and improve access to stroke rehabilitation services across Northwestern Ontario. These efforts will strengthen the continuum of integrated stroke care.”

Future Opportunity

Timely and consistent stroke rehabilitation is a critical part of recovery. The Ontario Stroke System, through its support of this pilot project, will be able to offer improved access to services for people living with stroke in communities across Northwestern Ontario.

Esmé French concludes, “The current service model is unable to meet the needs of those living in rural and remote communities. Telemedicine-based alternatives can be one solution to improve the overall quality and timeliness of care.”

“**Librestream’s Onsight mobile collaboration system will help people living with stroke achieve their maximum potential and have equitable access to service regardless of where they live.**”



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