

Abstract

'I learnt so much about being active': experiences of people with rheumatoid arthritis on the impact of a physiotherapist-led intervention to encourage physical activity

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Abstract

Introduction: Physical activity (PA) is an important component in improving the health of people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA). A Physiotherapist-led Intervention to Promote PA in people with RA (PIPPRA) was undertaken using the Behaviour Change (BC) Wheel. A qualitative study was conducted post intervention involving participants and healthcare professionals who participated in a pilot RCT.

Methods: Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with the schedule exploring: experience and views of the intervention; experience and suitability of outcome measures used; and perceptions of BC and PA. Thematic analysis was used as an analytical approach. The COREQ checklist provided guidance throughout.

Results: Fourteen participants and eight healthcare staff participated. Three main themes were generated from participants: (1) positive experience of intervention – 'I found it very

knowledgeable to help me get stronger'; (2) improvement in self-management – '... motivate me maybe to go back to doing a little bit more exercise'; and (3) negative impact of COVID-19 – 'I don't think doing it online again would be really good at all'. Two main themes were generated from healthcare professionals: (1) positive learning experience of delivery – 'Really made me realise the importance of discussing physical activity with patients'; and (2) positive approach to recruitment – 'Very professional team showing the importance of having a study member on site'.

Discussion: Participants had a positive experience of being involved in a BC intervention in order to improve their PA and found it acceptable as an intervention. Healthcare professionals also had a positive experience, in particular the importance of recommending PA in empowering patients.

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