

Understanding therapeutic alliance in the context of supported self-management in community stroke settings.

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1. Background

- This project is a step towards improving self-management support for patients accessing physiotherapy in community stroke services, focusing on therapeutic alliance and its association with patient activation.
- Patient activation is a behavioural concept, relating to how ready and willing individuals are to manage their own health and healthcare. [1] It has emerged as an important indicator of self management ability. [1]
- Therapeutic alliance relates to the collaborative relationships formed between therapists and patients, [2] and is considered a catalyst for treatment success across many health populations. [3,4]
- Therapeutic alliance has potential to address some of the challenges related to engagement and adherence in rehab. [5]
- However, there is little understanding of this concept in stroke self-management and even less that considers the views of stroke survivors.

2. Research questions

- 1:** How does therapeutic alliance influence patient activation for people with chronic health conditions?
- 2:** What is the association between therapeutic alliance and patient activation in patients receiving physiotherapy in community stroke settings?
- 3:** Which aspects of therapeutic alliance do stroke survivors feel are most important to support greater patient activation and development of self-management behaviours?

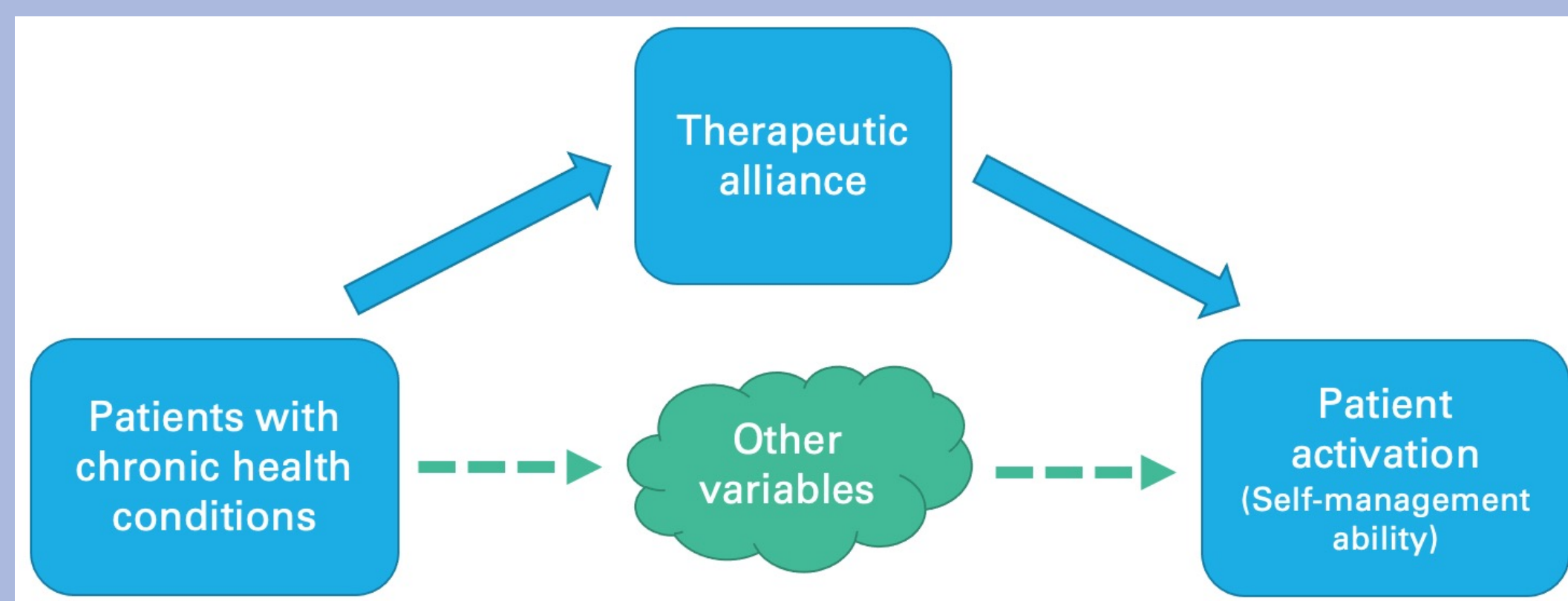
3. Project plan

- Stroke Association funding obtained for 2021/2022 start
- Anticipated ethical approval 2022

4. Methods

Work Package 1: Literature review.

- Develop a working model of therapeutic alliance & patient activation in people with chronic health conditions.
- Identify aspects of alliance & confounding variables expected to influence patient activation (control variables).



Work package 3: Qualitative Phase

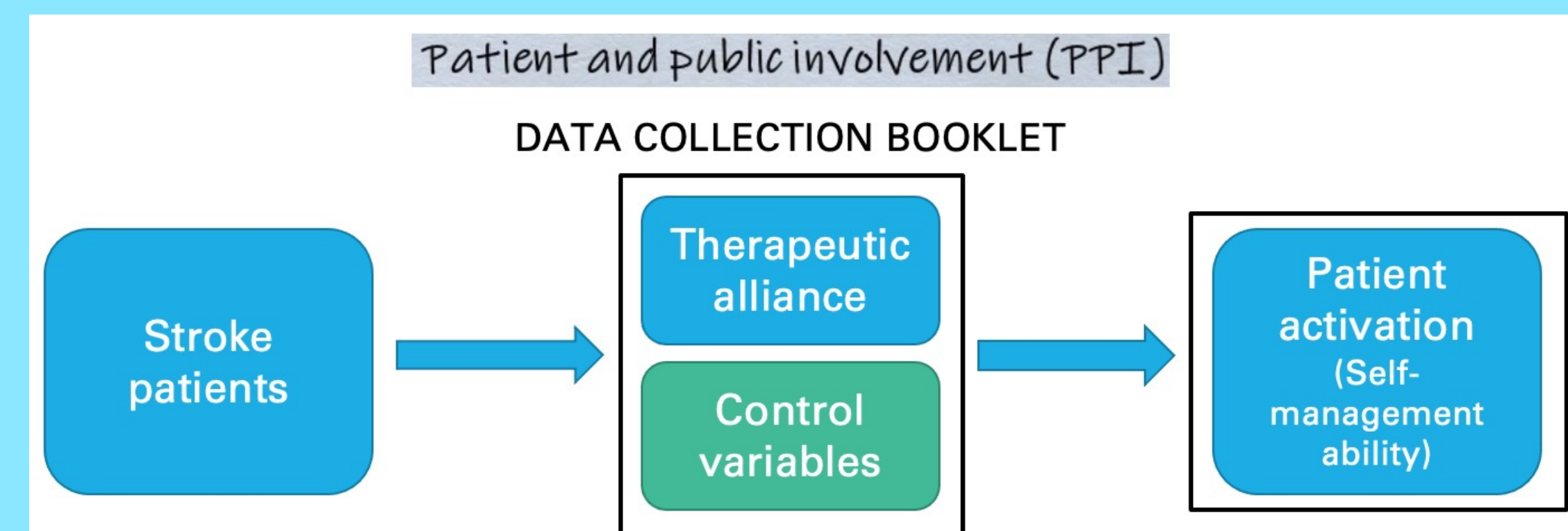
- Semi-structured interviews - sub set of stroke patients from work package 2.
- Identify aspects of therapeutic alliance considered important for patient activation in stroke

	Low activation	High activation
Low alliance		
High alliance		

- Purposeful sampling to capture participants with high and low alliance and activation.
- Framework analysis using COM-B framework of behaviour change - ascertaining behavioural aspects of patient activation.
- Second inductive thematic analysis to identify aspects of alliance most important for facilitating these behaviours.

Work Package 2: Quantitative Phase.

- Cross-sectional - multivariate regression of relationships between therapeutic alliance & patient activation scores.



Variables and measurement tools:

- Independent variable: therapeutic alliance (Working alliance inventory)
- Dependent variable: patient activation (Patient Activation Measure)
- Expected control variables: Depression (PHQ-9), health literacy (HLS-Q12), health related QOL (EuroQol), social support (PRQ)

5. Patient and Public Involvement (PPI)

PPI is embedded throughout this PhD project through the following activities:

- Advising on aphasia friendly and inclusive research documentation, data collection methods and recruitment strategy.
- Developing data collection booklet to reduce assessment burden.
- Analysing qualitative data and developing patient led practice recommendations

6. Expected outcome

This project will better understand therapeutic alliance in the context of supported self-management in community stroke services.

- identify key aspects of therapeutic alliance most important to stroke survivors to develop and maintain self-management behaviours.
- provide practice and research based recommendations, identifying strategies and approaches used by clinicians to increase patient activation and engagement in stroke self-management.

7. References

1. Hibbard J, Gilbert H. Supporting people to manage their health: An introduction to patient activation: The Kings Fund; 2014 [cited 2014 May]. Available from: https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/field_publication_file/supporting-people-manage-health-patient-activation-may14.pdf. 2. Martin DJ, et al. Relation of the Therapeutic Alliance With Outcome and Other Variables: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology*. 2000;68(3):438-50. 3. Lebowich L, Front O, McCarthy K, Zilcha-Mano S. How do supportive techniques bring about therapeutic change: The role of therapeutic alliance as a potential mediator. *Psychotherapy*. 2020;57(2):151-159. 4. Zaslavski S, et al. The Role of the Therapeutic Alliance in Eating Disorder Treatment Outcomes: A Systematic Review. *Eating Disorders*. 2015;23(2):99-114. 5. Lawton M, et al. Therapeutic Alliances in Stroke Rehabilitation: A Meta-Ethnography. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*. 2016;97(11):1979-93.

8. Acknowledgements

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