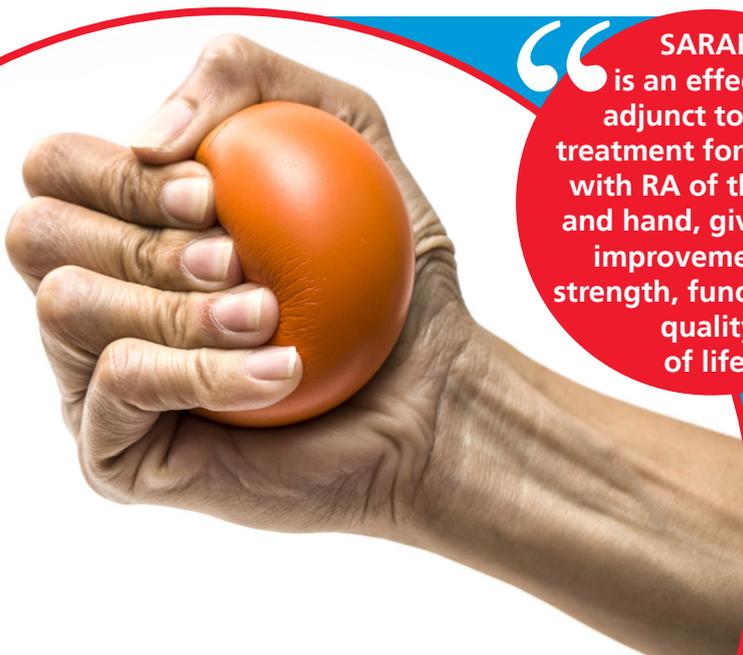


CLAHRC BITE

A bite-sized summary of CLAHRC Oxford research

NIHR CLAHRC Oxford | Feb 2016

SARAH: Improving strength and function for Rheumatoid Arthritis of the Hand



“SARAH is an effective adjunct to drug treatment for patients with RA of the wrist and hand, giving real improvements in strength, function and quality of life.”

Who?

People with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA), an aggressive inflammatory disease, of the hand and wrist whose RA is controlled by drug treatment.

What?

The SARAH (Strengthening And Stretching For Rheumatoid Arthritis of the Hand) programme is a new evidence based exercise programme underpinned by behavioural change strategies. It improves function, disability and quality of life for people with RA of the wrist and hand.

What is the evidence?

1. Tested in a clinical trial of 490 people with RA of the hand and wrist, across 17 NHS Trusts.
2. Participants allocated to the SARAH exercise programme had an overall improvement of 7.9 points* at 12 months, compared to the usual care group's 3.6.
3. Resulted in an update of the NICE guideline on RA in Adults

*based on the Michigan Hand Outcome Questionnaire

Background

Whilst drug therapies are highly effective in reducing clinical symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis, they do not always result in improvement in function, strength or quality of life.

The SARAH exercise programme is an individually tailored progressive programme consisting of seven stretches and four strengthening exercises.

Patients are supported to exercise independently by NHS therapists attending five exercise sessions over 12 weeks. Therapists monitor progress and tailor the exercises to each patient.

The results demonstrated that exercises are a low cost, effective adjunct across a range of different drug treatments.

This research resulted in an update of the NICE guideline on RA in adults, and we are now working with NHS Choices to increase access to this novel, proven intervention.

About NIHR CLAHRC Oxford

The Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care Oxford at Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust is a partnership between universities, healthcare commissioners and the NHS in Oxford and the Thames Valley.

This research was supported by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NHS, the NIHR or the Department of Health. View more BITEs at www.clahrcpp.co.uk



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References:

Lamb, S.E. *et al.*, 2015. Exercises to improve function of the rheumatoid hand (SARAH): a randomised controlled trial, *The Lancet*, 385(9966), pp.421–429

Heine, P.J., *et al.*, 2012. Development and delivery of an exercise intervention for rheumatoid arthritis: Strengthening and stretching for rheumatoid arthritis of the hand (SARAH) trial, *Physiotherapy*, 98(2012), pp.121–130

Useful Links:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg79/chapter/1

www.octru.ox.ac.uk/trials/trials-completed/SARAHtrial

www.octru.ox.ac.uk/trials/trials-completed/SARAHtrial/sarah-trial-materials

Coming soon:

Online training programmes for clinicians (iSARAH) and patients (mySARAH). Visit clahrc-oxford.nihr.ac.uk for updates.