



*van der Gaag, A., Smith, L., David, S., Moss, B., Cornelius, V., Laing, S., & Mowles, C. (2005). Therapy and support services for people with long-term stroke and aphasia and their relatives: a six-month follow up study. Clinical Rehabilitation, 19, 372-380.*

**Objective:** To evaluate the impact of attending an aphasia therapy centre on quality of life and communication skills in people with stroke and aphasia and their relatives.

**Design:** Before and after study, six months duration.

**Setting:** Community-based aphasia therapy centre in the United Kingdom.

**Participants:** Thirty-eight men and women with aphasia following a stroke, and 22 of their relatives. Mean time since stroke was 33 months (SD 24.1).

**Interventions:** A range of group therapies for people with aphasia and their relatives and counselling for individuals and couples.

**Outcome measures:** Quantitative outcome measures were ratings of quality of life and communication for people with aphasia, and relatives' independent ratings of communication and coping with caring. Qualitative outcomes were perceptions of quality of life and communication skills using semi-structured interviews.

**Results:** Improvement was detected on all outcomes at six months. There were significant changes from baseline on the quality of life measure, mean difference 0.14 (95% confidence interval 0.02, 0.26); and the communication measure assessed by people with aphasia and their relatives, mean difference 12.8 (4.0, 21.5) and 9.7 (3.6, 15.7) respectively. The changes on the coping with caring measure were not significant, though the direction of change was positive. Qualitative interviews revealed a similar pattern of benefit in terms of increased levels of self-confidence and changes in lifestyle and levels of independence.

**Conclusions:** The results suggest that this therapeutic approach has an impact on quality of life and communication for people with aphasia and their relatives.