



Improving Access to Post-Stroke Care in the Cowichan Valley

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Background

Cardiovascular accident (CVA) or transient ischemic attack (TIA) patients who are not admitted to Cowichan District Hospital (CDH) must follow up independently at a Stroke Rapid Assessment Unit in either Victoria or Nanaimo.

Some of the available post-stroke services in the Cowichan Valley are:

- Physiotherapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Counselling
- Speech Language Pathology
- Support groups

Barriers to non-admitted CVA or TIA patients from Cowichan accessing these services include:

- A lack of information about local services
- Geographical separation from these services



Aim

To improve access to post-stroke services for patients in the Cowichan Valley.

First Step: To gain qualitative information about non-admitted patient's access to post-stroke services in the Cowichan Valley

Patient Survey

A survey was developed and distributed to 60 patients who met the following criteria:

- Presented at CDH emergency with significant CVA or TIA symptoms from April 2017 to March 2019
- Were discharged the same day as they arrived

The purpose of this survey was to learn about patient's:

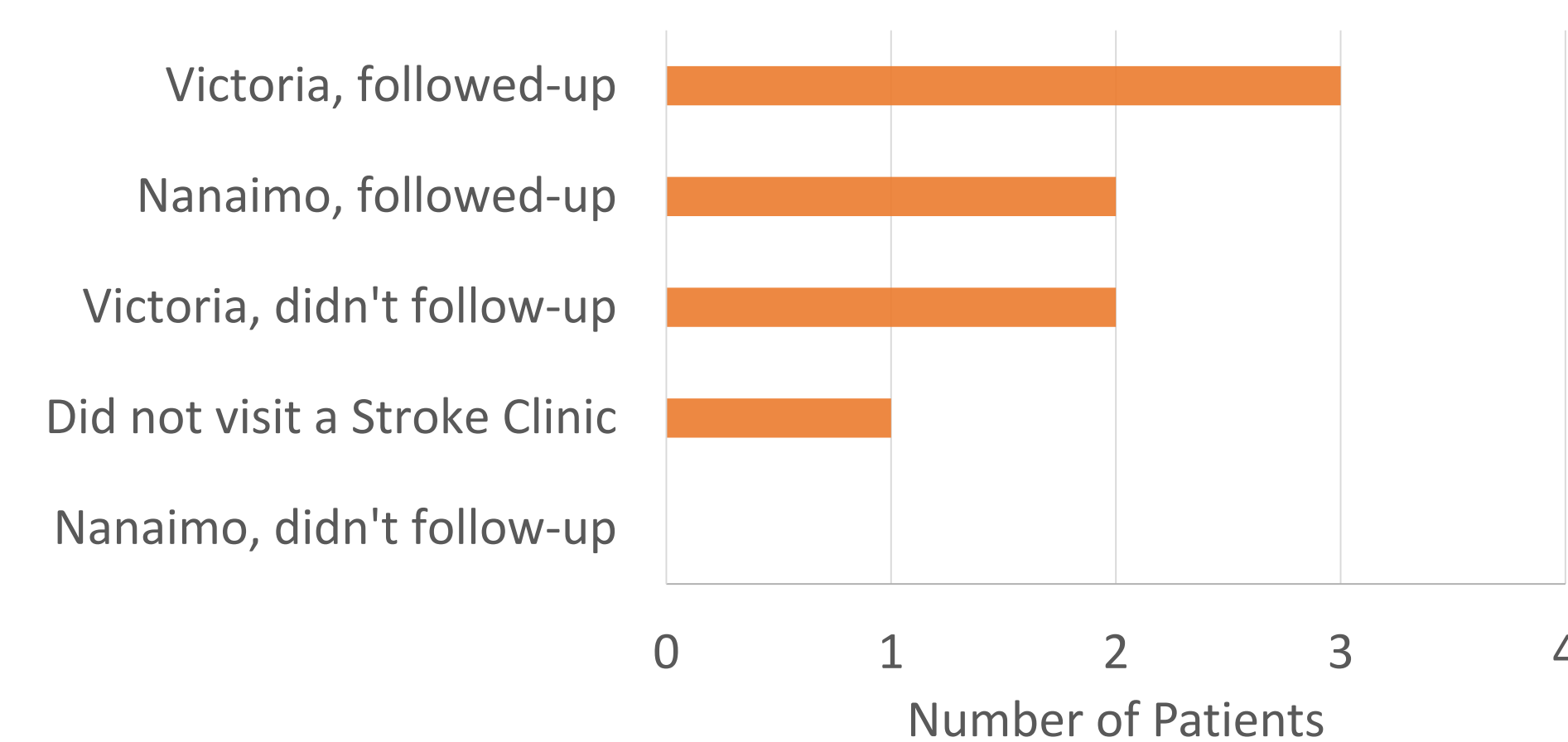
1. Knowledge of available post-stroke services in Cowichan
2. Access to post-stroke services in Cowichan
3. Comments or feedback regarding their rehabilitation

Questions were designed using a Likert-type scale when possible.

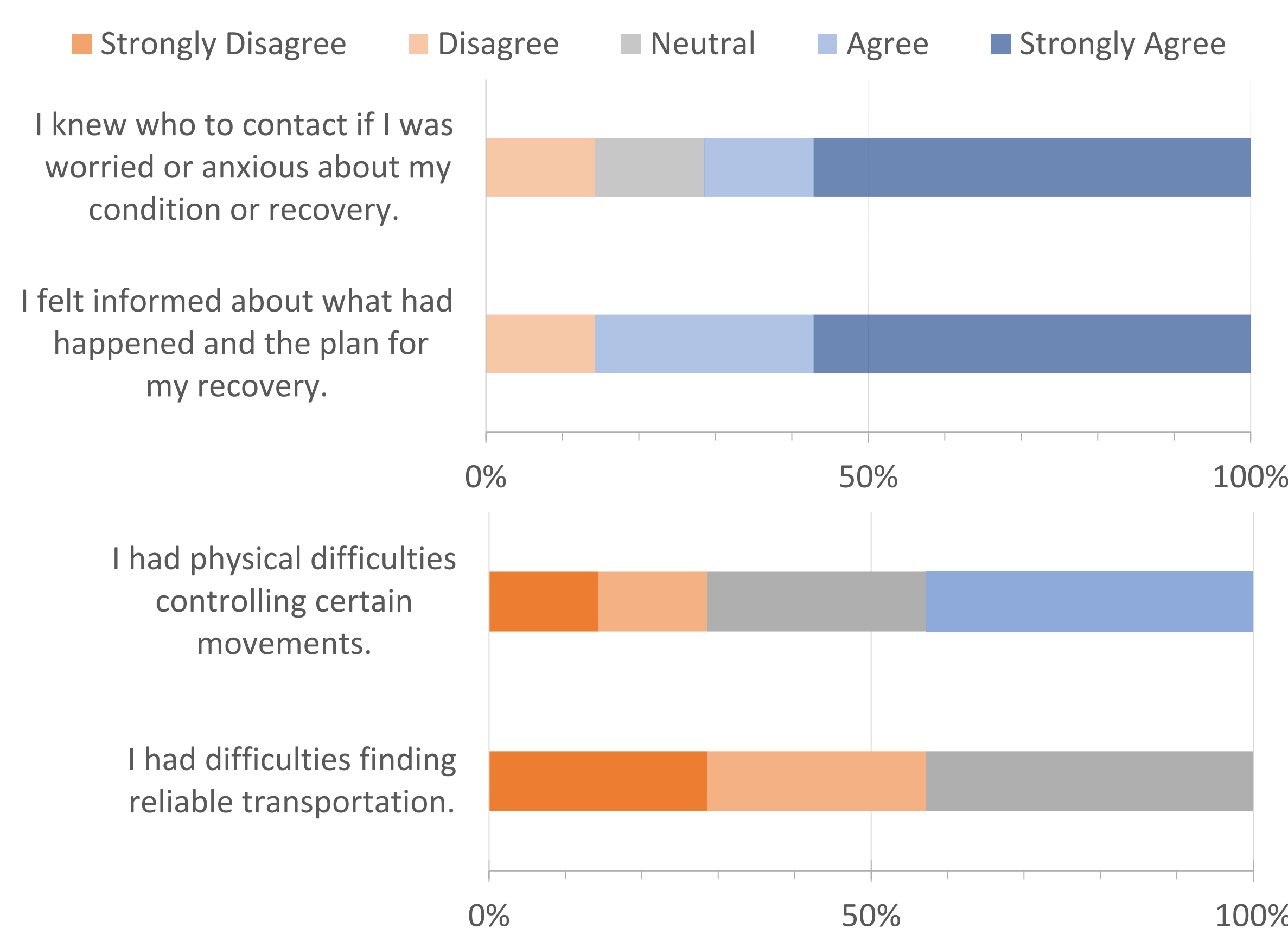
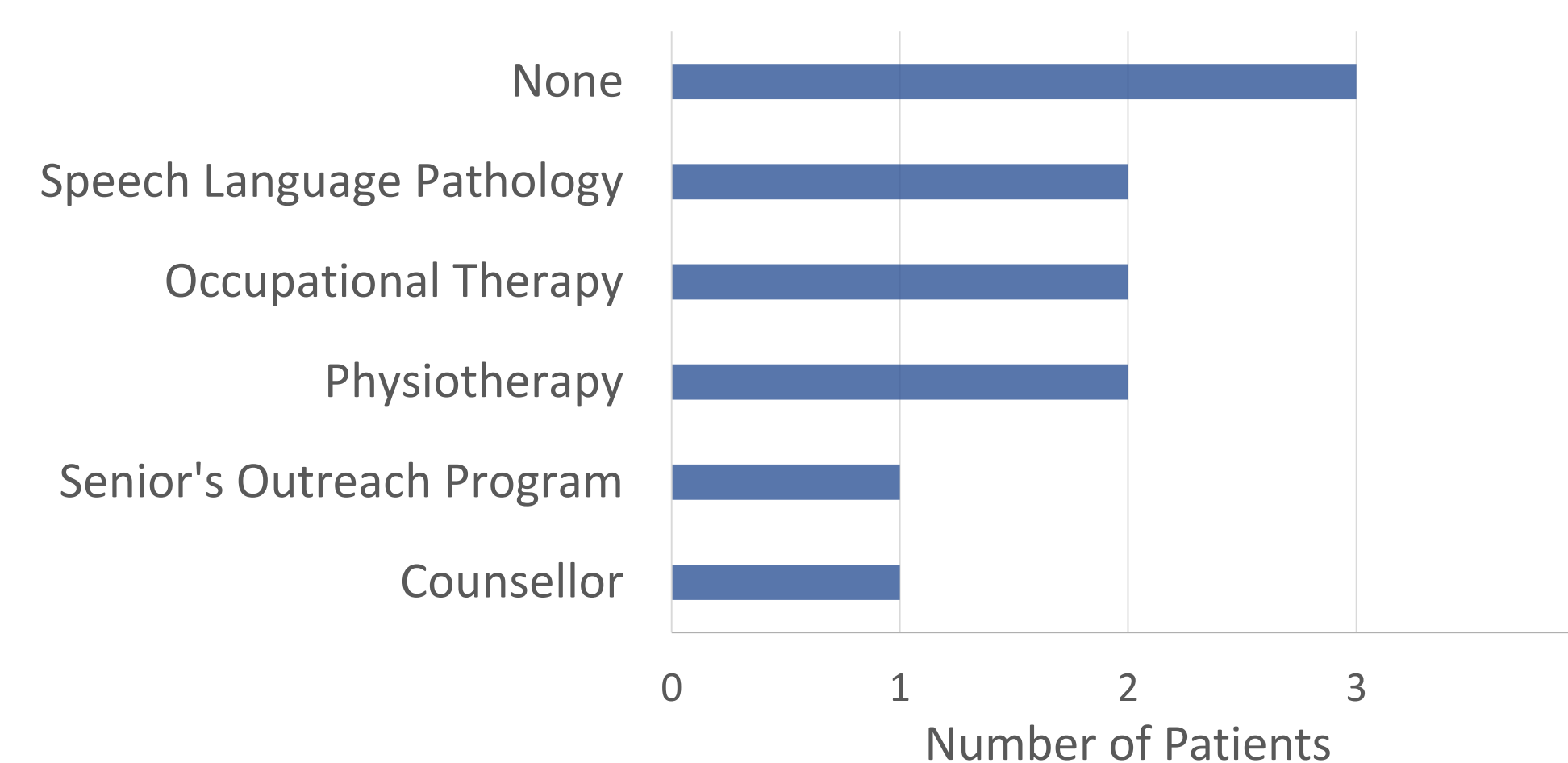
Survey Results

A total of 8 patients returned completed surveys for a response rate of 13.3%. Due to the small sample size and low response rate, responses shouldn't be considered as a representation of the patient population; however, they still provide useful information about the respondent's experiences.

Stroke Clinic - Location and Follow-up



Post-Stroke Services Accessed



Patient Interviews

A total of 5 patients were interviewed about their experiences with post-stroke care in Cowichan and many of the survey respondents left written comments. This helped us learn more detailed information about the barriers to accessing post-stroke services.

General Summary of Patient Experiences:

1. Rehabilitation services were helpful when utilized
2. Information about available post-stroke services usually came from the diligent research of a family member
3. Keeping track of appointments at the Stroke Clinic and rehabilitation services was difficult, even with assistance from a caregiver

What We Learned

1. Non-admitted CVA or TIA patients tend to lack information about services that many in-patients receive.
 - This is in part due to the shorter time that non-admitted patients and their caregivers spend in contact with healthcare professionals.
2. Although many respondents had the information they needed, more can be done to inform all patients about existing services.
 - Patients without strong caregiver support lacked information and had less motivation to seek useful services.
 - There is no comprehensive document that describes the available post-stroke services in the Cowichan Valley.
3. Future data collection should be done when patients are physically present to improve response rates and more accurately sample the patient population.
 - Giving patients the survey as they leave the hospital or Stroke Clinic will increase response rates drastically and will provide real time data to gauge improvements.

Future Work

- Create a tool to measure the access to post-stroke services in the Cowichan Valley over time
- Reach out to other health authorities to learn how they provide information about rehabilitation services to stroke patients
- Implement a strategy for spreading information about post-stroke services in the Cowichan Valley to relevant patients

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