

OPTIMISING PATHWAYS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CARE AFTER TRANSIENT ISCHAEMIC ATTACK AND MINOR STROKE

A Newsletter from the OPTIMISE Study Team

Summer 2025

Top stories in this newsletter



Participate in
OPTIMISE survey



OPTIMISE at the UK
Stroke Forum 2025



Publication Awards:
Meet Naomi



PPI: In their own words

OPTIMISE project update



We have now received ethical approval for our study from the University of Nottingham! We launched an online survey for healthcare professionals which explores what support for mood and cognitive changes is available to people after TIA/minor stroke, and what might be the barriers to providing that support.

If you are a healthcare professional who worked with individuals affected by TIA/minor stroke in the past year, you can complete the survey by clicking [HERE](#).

You can also find our poster on the next page

OPTIMISE at the UK Stroke Forum 2025!

The UK Stroke Forum is the largest multidisciplinary stroke conference in the country and a fantastic opportunity to connect, learn, and collaborate and this year it is taking place in Aberdeen between 25th and 27th November.

We are delighted to share that two of our abstracts have been accepted for the UK Stroke Forum 2025: one in-person poster and one digital poster! We will be sharing findings from the OPTIMISE study alongside leading stroke researchers, clinicians, and patient groups from across the UK.

[Registration is now open](#) — we'd love to see you there!

Don't worry if you can't attend, we will share some of our reflections from the conference in our future Newsletters

Optimising Pathways of Psychological Care after Transient Ischaemic Attack and Minor Stroke (OPTIMISE)

Take part in a short online survey to help us better understand the support available for changes in mood and cognition after a diagnosis of Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) or Minor Stroke



We are looking for:

Clinicians and professionals who work directly with people who have experienced a TIA or minor stroke within the past year

All participants need to be 18 years old or older and work in the UK

Questions?

Contact us at
07468702178

Optimise_Study@nottshc.nhs.uk

Interested?

Scan the QR code to complete this short online survey

[Click here for OPTIMISE study website](#)



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2024 Institute of Mental Health Publication Awards

Naomi Thorpe, who has been supporting the OPTIMISE project, recently received an **Institute of Mental Health Publication Award** for the best publication by an employee of Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust who does not have a substantive contract with a university.

The winning article: *“A scoping review of remote group-based psychological interventions for people after transient ischemic attack and stroke”* can be read [HERE](#).

You can read more about Naomi and the findings of the review below.



I'm Naomi Thorpe, Senior Information Specialist for the Knowledge and Library Services at Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. We provide the Trust and the Institute of Mental Health with an evidence support service to support staff to find the latest evidence for patient care, research, learning, and evidence-based practice across services.

Key findings from the scoping review

Six studies were included in the review; all focused on people who had experienced a stroke and none targeted people with TIA.

Interventions were delivered in various remote formats, including:

- Telephone calls,
- Videoconferencing,
- Online platforms,
- Hybrid approaches combining video with in-person sessions.

Most sessions took place in the community or at home, making them more accessible for participants.

Improvements in mood and/or quality of life were reported across the studies reviewed.

What's still needed?

- More research to understand potential benefits of remote interventions work, especially for people with TIA.
- Better reporting on what helps or hinders the successful delivery of these programmes.
- Further high-quality research and reporting of barriers/facilitators to implementation to determine effectiveness of remote interventions.

MYTH: “Stress can cause stroke”

TRUTH: Feeling stressed doesn't directly spark a stroke but having long-term stress can gently nudge up the chances. Over time, persistent tension may raise blood pressure and lead to habits like comfort eating or skipping exercise. [The World Stroke Organization](#) also notes that ongoing stress can contribute to hardened arteries and clotting tendencies. Walks, chatting with friends, or basic breathing exercises help keep stress levels manageable. Over time, those small moments of calm support healthier blood pressure and circulation. If you ever feel very overwhelmed, a chat with your GP or a counsellor can be a supportive next step.

Patient and Public Involvement: In their own words

We recently invited members of our Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) group to reflect on their experiences of being involved in the OPTIMISE study. We're pleased to share the thoughtful reflections of one of our contributors, Peter.

“Any opportunity to involve the ‘lay person’ in matters like this helps prevent it from becoming too medical or insular.”

Peter shared that one of the most rewarding parts of being involved is meeting others who feel the same way. What stood out most was the dedication of the research team and a feeling that their contribution is valued.

“It surprised me how committed the professionals are to pushing the research forward.”

“Our opinions are valid and come from personal lived experience.”

When asked what they'd say to someone considering joining a PPI group, their advice was simple:

“Do it.”

We hope to feature more reflections from our PPI members in future editions. Thank you to all who support and shape this research.

If you are interested in finding out more about the PPI group [HERE](#) or you can email us:

Optimise_Study@nottshc.nhs.uk

Thank you for reading!