



FES in action

Examples of FES services in the UK

May 2022

Experts in MS

National Clinical FES Centre Salisbury

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Background

Odstock Medical Limited is a company owned by Salisbury Health Care NHS Foundation Trust. It was set up to provide FES equipment and services, developing from the research work and clinical service that took place in the dept Clinical Science and Engineering at Salisbury District Hospital. The service is located at Salisbury District Hospital. OML also contract clinicians around the UK to provide FES treatment using OML devices.

The service evolved following several research studies funded by the Department of Health, MS Trust, Stroke Association, Action Research and other funding bodies. These studies demonstrated a need to support the participants following the studies but also generated a lot of interest from people with neurological problems. The service was set up to address this demand. We also aim to disseminate the methods and skills we have developed by providing FES training courses and we have now trained over 3000 clinicians in the UK.

Service description

The Salisbury clinic has around 850 active patients of which about half have MS. Since 1996 we have treated around 6750 patients with FES. There are currently about 1000 patients supported by OML's outreach clinics.

The Salisbury FES team consists of 2.5 FTE physiotherapists and 0.3 FTE clinical Scientists.

The service accepts referrals for all upper motor neuron conditions. This includes MS, stroke, spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, hereditary spastic paraparesis, Parkinson's disease, head injury and a subarachnoid haemorrhage.

The service has a contract with the local CCG to supply FES to assist walking. Other areas require an individual funding request, or prior approval. Privately funded referrals are also accepted. Most referrals are from GP's but often on the recommendation of a neuro-physiotherapist or MS nurse. Some patients begin FES use in their local clinic and are transferred to Salisbury for long term FES care.

The standard pathway consists of an initial assessment appointment to determine if FES is suitable, 2 appointments separated by 1 week where the patient is taught how to use FES and then follow up at 6, 18, 42 weeks and the yearly for as long as FES is used.

Key ingredients of the service are:

- Experienced and well trained staff
- Good training of patients in the use of FES
- Regular planned follow-up
- Prompt response in response to patient problems
- Well developed clinical methods and equipment
- Good awareness of FES in referring clinicians

Patient experience and outcomes

This is why we still do FES:

"I have been using a single channel stimulator for foot drop, due to MS, for 5 years. I wear it every day and it has allowed me to carry on working full-time. It is the single most helpful thing in this journey as a patient, and has allowed me to remain as active as possible. I can't praise the Odstock Medical staff enough!"

This quote from one our patients is not exceptional but has been said in different ways by many patients, particularly with MS. It is clear that FES provides a means of maintain and improving mobility that is not possible

with other standard interventions and is therefore our responsibility to make sure FES is available to all people who could benefit from it.

Our studies have shown:

- Increased confidence while walking. This is the most frequent response from patients in clinic.
- Reduced falls. 72% fewer falls in our MS RCT.
- Reduced effort of walking – Reduced Physiological cost index, and Borg rate of perceived effort.
- Increased walking speed both as an orthotic effect (when the device is worn) and as a training effect (after FES use)
- Greater participation in activities of daily living
- Improved gait quality
- The treatment is cost effective and can be more cost effective than AFOs due to much greater adherence to treatment and increase quality of life.
- FES is an effective long term mobility aid with an average duration of use of 5 years.
- FES gives about 4 years extra mobility to pwMS. This is demonstrated that on average, pwMS walk with the same walking speed with FES that they did without FES 4 years previously.

Costs and savings

April 2022 prices. Initial assessment appointments are free of charge. Treatment sessions are £396 giving a total charge of £1977 in the first year and £396 in subsequent years. This includes the cost of the device and consumables, clinical treatment and any device maintenance required.

It is likely that FES will result in fewer falls that cause injury, changing from an average of one fall that causes an injury that requires medical attention every 2.15 years to one fall every 7 years. We estimated this may save the NHS £611 a year at 2017 prices.

Do you agree that FES should be widely available for all people with MS who could benefit?

Yes. It makes a real difference to people's lives.



We're the MS Society.

Our community is here for you through the highs, lows and everything in between. We understand what life's like with MS.

Together, we are strong enough to stop MS.

Contact us

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 **Let's stop MS together**