ABSTRACT

The proposed mixed-methods study will focus on establishing ‘current practice’ in Canadian pediatric rehabilitation centres with respect to the availability and feasibility of intensive upper extremity training programs. These would include constraint-induced movement therapy (CIMT) and/or hand-arm bimanual intensive therapy (HABIT) programs. A telephone survey will be conducted with managers of cerebral palsy (CP) programs of rehabilitation centres that are mandated to offer interventions to children with CP who have hemiplegia. This environmental scan will ascertain the proportion of centres that provide intensive upper extremity training programs. For centres that provide this type of intervention, the characteristics of the program will be determined. Whether or not these programs exist at the centres, clinicians’ perspectives on the perceived obstacles and facilitators to establishing and/or maintaining intensive hand function programs will be explored. This quantitative survey will be supplemented by focus groups across the country. A phenomenological approach will be used to analyze the information obtained, to further enrich our understanding of the barriers and facilitators to development of these efficacious treatment programs for children with hemiplegia.

A separate study is being planned, as part of the KT initiatives of the CP Demonstration Project of NeuroDevNet, a National Centre of Excellence. This latter study aims to establish best practice recommendations for intensive hand function intervention programs by international experts, based on current evidence. Current practice (provided by this study) will then be compared to best practice recommendations to determine strategies to enhance uptake and use of new knowledge on this efficacious treatment.