

Alternative and Augmentative Communication in Subacute Multidisciplinary Neurorehabilitation

BACKGROUND AND AIM

People with aphasia (PWA) have been shown to be less involved in their rehabilitation than people without disorders of communication (1). At Hammel Neurorehabilitation Centre efforts are being made to enhance the participation of PWA by initiating the multidisciplinary staff in the application of alternative and augmentative communication (AAC).

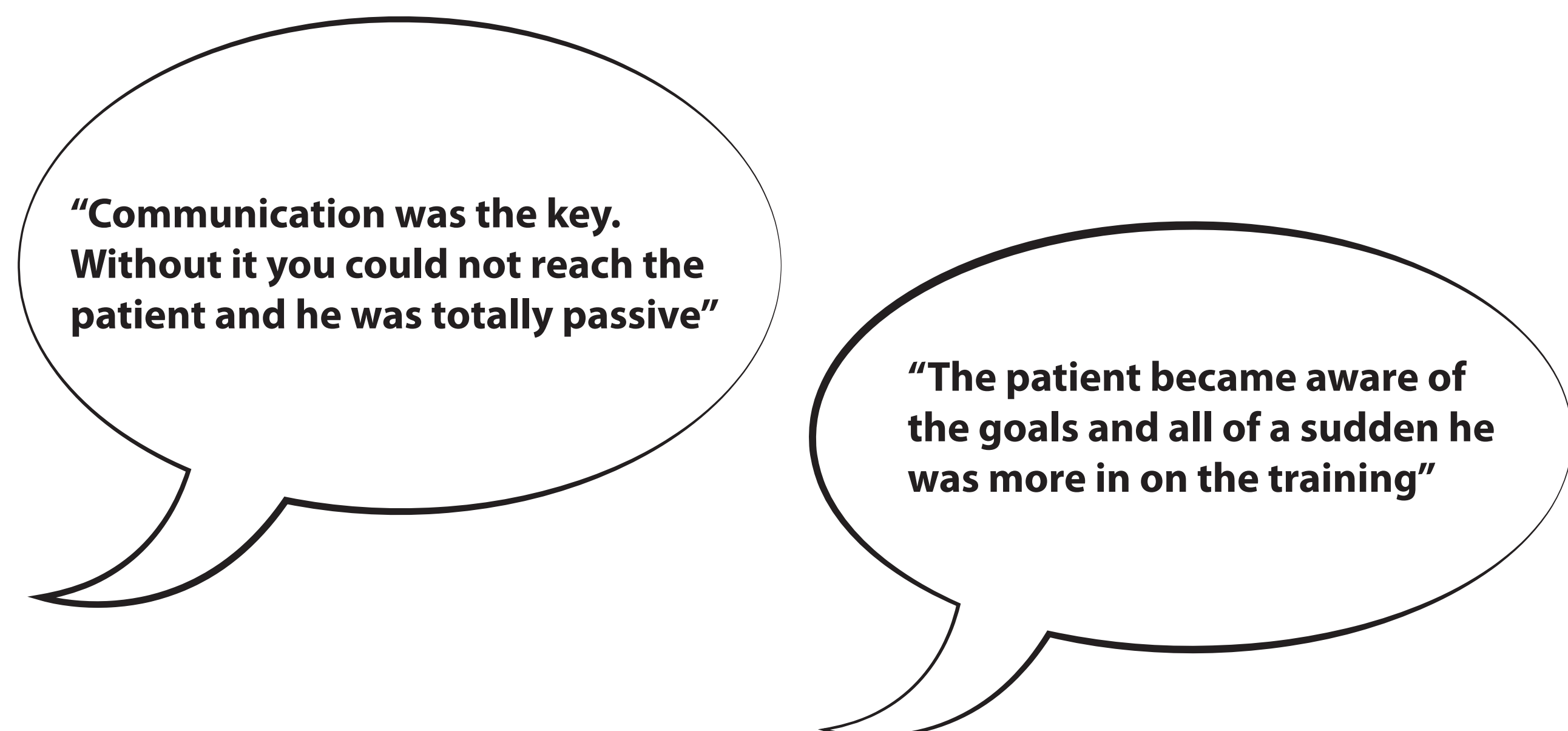
The aim of the present study is to describe the impact of AAC on the successful participation in rehabilitation of a patient with severe aphasia.

METHODS

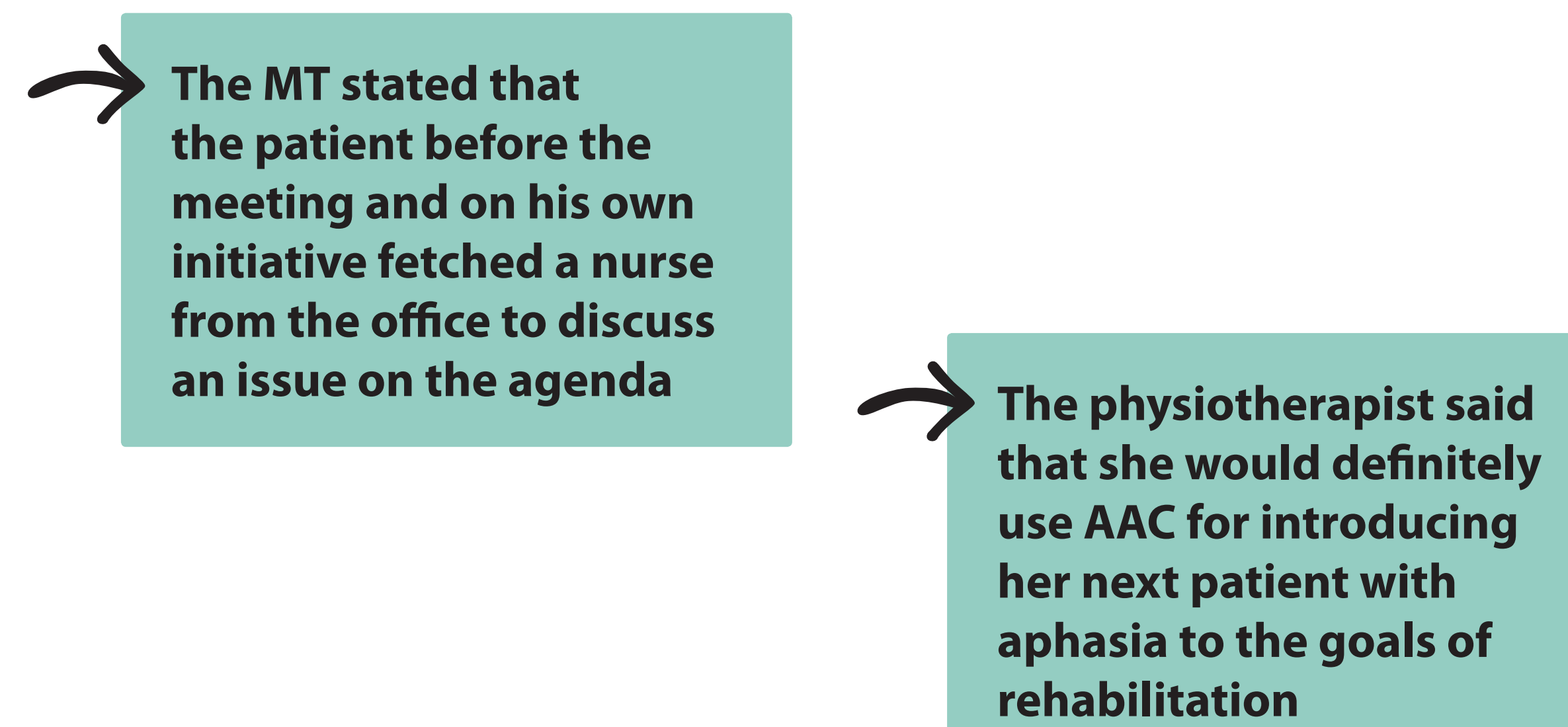
A case study was conducted and data was collected through three approaches to communication with a patient with severe jargon aphasia;

1. An interview with the multidisciplinary team (MT)
2. Observations by the speech and language therapist (SLT)
3. Documents;
 - An agenda for a meeting
 - A leaflet with strategies for communication

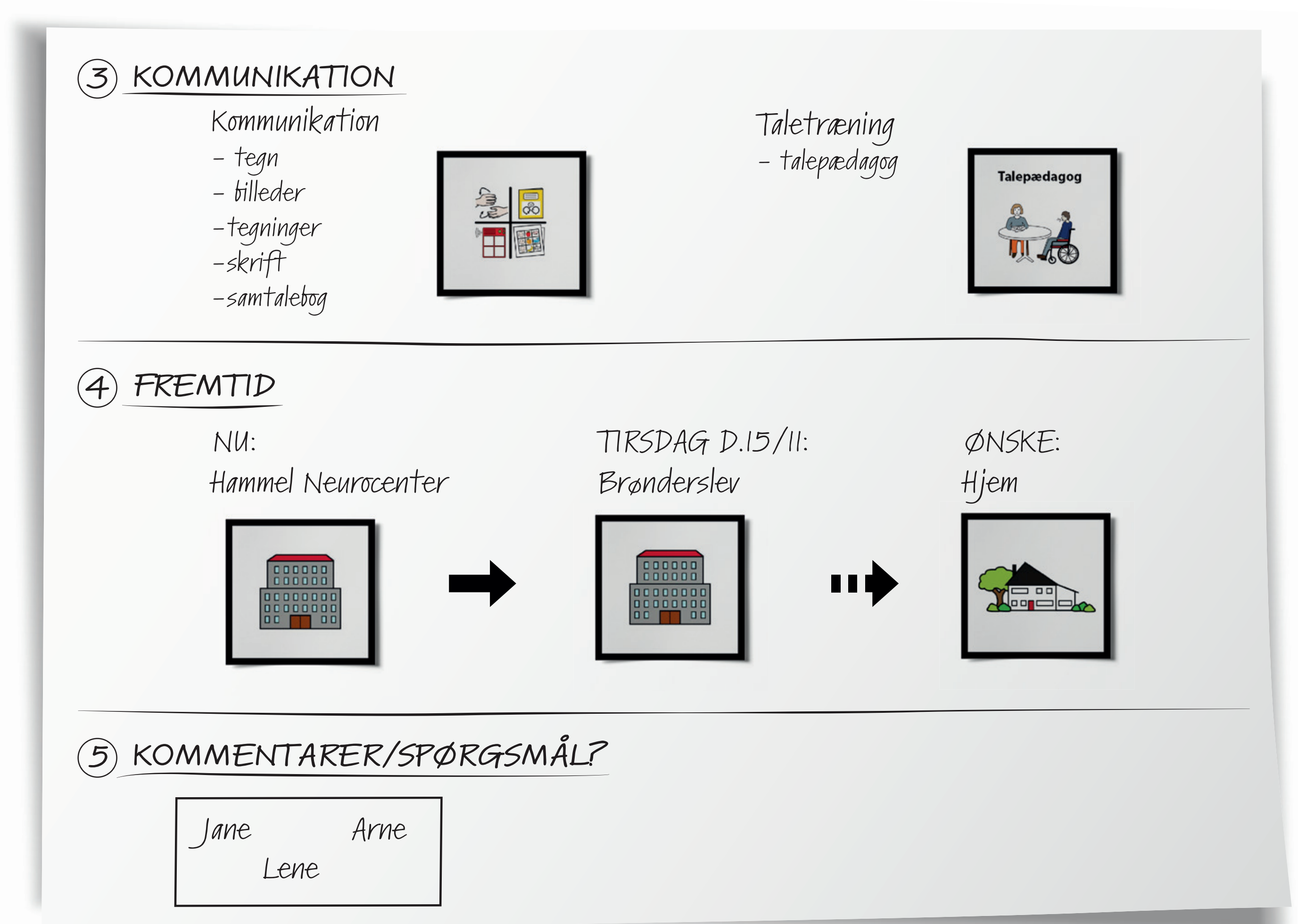
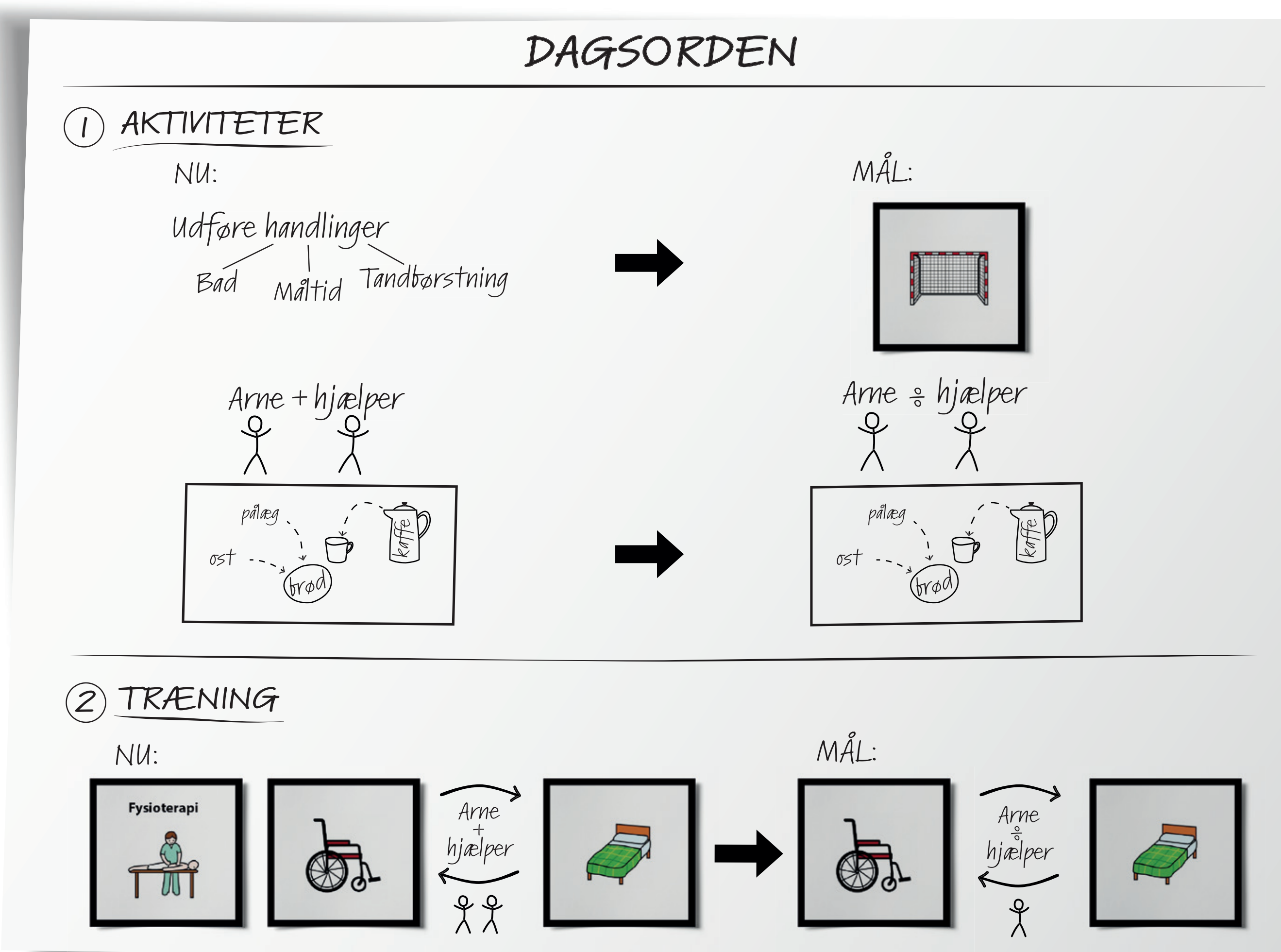
INTERVIEW



OBSERVATIONS



DOCUMENTS



RESULTS

INTERVIEW

- The patient's participation evolved from inactivity as a result of changes in the MT's communication with the patient.
- By introducing the patient to the goals of rehabilitation by the means of AAC the patient's participation in the training changed into being active and focused.
- The patient started making progress right after being introduced to the goals of rehabilitation.

OBSERVATIONS

- The MT competently learned to apply AAC taking a close cooperation with the SLT as a starting point.
- The MT discussed if the patient could have gotten further had he been introduced to the goals of rehabilitation at an earlier point.
- The MT gradually spent more time preparing conversations and communicating with the patient.
- The patient was the center of the meeting, participating actively and with confidence.
- The family stated that the patient had taken part in the meeting in the same way as he used to do.

DOCUMENTS

- The agenda and the leaflet were AAC-inspired in the layout and the content.
- The agenda consisted of five items which had all been presented to the patient and to his family beforehand.
- Three of the items were illustrated with the drawings from the introduction of the goals of rehabilitation.
- The leaflet featured the patient's habits and preferences, the strategy of communication, and detailed descriptions of communication in four everyday situations.

CONCLUSION

- The MT became aware of the significance of using AAC with PWA in subacute multidisciplinary rehabilitation
- AAC was a key-factor in the patient becoming actively participating in his rehabilitation.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE

- The results indicate that the use of AAC and the motivation of the team for using AAC are important factors in subacute neurorehabilitation of people with severe aphasia.