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PRESS RELEASE

CHANGING LIVES: A Nintendo Wii helped me recover from a stroke.

PHYSIOTHERAPISTS at Blackpool Victoria Hospital have used a Nintendo Wii to change the life of a Fleetwood man.

The Wii Sport golf game formed an important part of the rehabilitation keen golfer John Pearson received after suffering a Stroke in July 2009.

For Mr Pearson, his stroke left him paralysed in his right side affecting his speech and movement. He was brought to Ward C, the dedicated Stroke Ward at Victoria Hospital, where he received immediate medical treatment.

A Stroke is what happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off, its effects are sudden and immediately impacts on the body. Rehabilitation starts as soon the patient is well enough with physiotherapy programmes tailored to each patient's individual needs.

Prior to his Stroke, Mr Pearson was a keen golfer, heavily involved with Fleetwood Golf Club as secretary of the senior team and a director of the club. It was this that inspired members of the physiotherapy team to suggest Mr Pearson use the Wii Sport golf game to encourage movement to return to his right side and to practice putting, a hobby he previously most enjoyed.

Mr Pearson said: "When the physio staff first mentioned using the Wii Sport golf game I thought they were joking. My second thought was how on earth I was going to use it; I had never used anything like it before. But once they showed me what to do I started to enjoy myself and was regaining movement."

To compliment his Wii Sport golf rehabilitation, once Mr Pearson was discharged, a member of the Early Discharge Team accompanied him and his wife Linda to Fleetwood Golf Course, where the movements learnt on the virtual golf course were transferred to the actual putting greens of the links course.

After 10 months, Mr Pearson has made a strong recovery. Movement in his right side has returned and his speech is getting better. He adds: "One of the first things I did when I was discharged was to buy a Wii and the Tiger Woods Pro Golf game - I have become quite an expert at virtual golf and it has kept my mobility going."

Mrs Pearson is also a keen golfer and is Lady Captain of Fleetwood Golf Club. She said: "When John had his stroke, I never could have imagined that a game console would play an important part in his rehabilitation. Nor did I think that his love of golf

would come in handy during his recovery. We would like to say a big thank you to all the staff at Victoria Hospital who have worked with us to improve John's health."

Debbie Dua, Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist said: "The Wii is a relatively new piece of equipment used within rehabilitation physiotherapy.

"The small amount of movement required to play a game such as golf encourages muscles to remember movement. Alongside the golf programme, we also use the down hill slalom skiing package to encourage balance improvements.

"We are experiencing great results with the Wii at present, not only does it help patients to regain movement, it makes therapy fun and distracts them from their disability. Sometimes there are even competitions in the gym between patients making therapy a more social event which impacts positively on their mood".



Above: Mr and Mrs Pearson at Fleetwood Golf Course.

Notes to Editors:

Facts and figures about stroke from www.stroke.org.uk

- An estimated 150,000 people have a stroke in the UK each year
- Stroke is the third most common cause of death in the England and Wales after heart disease and cancer.
- An estimated 150,000 people have a stroke in the UK each year attributing to over 67,000 deaths to stroke each year in the UK.
- There are over 67,000 deaths due to stroke each year in the UK
- Stroke is the third most common cause of death in England and Wales, after heart disease and cancer
- Stroke accounts for 9 per cent of all deaths in men and 13 per cent of deaths in women in the UK

- Stroke has a greater disability impact than any other chronic disease. Over 300,000 people are living with moderate to severe disabilities as a result of stroke
- The direct cost of stroke to the NHS is estimated to be £2.8 billion. The cost to the wider economy is £1.8 billion. The informal care cost is £2.4 billion
- Stroke patients occupy around 20 per cent of all acute hospital beds and 25 per cent of long term beds
- Stroke units save lives: for stroke patients general wards have a 14% to 25% higher mortality rate than stroke units
- Each year over 130,000 people in England and Wales have a stroke. About 10,000 of these are under retirement age

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