

2007 Archive
Clinical Taskforce Newsletter 'Clinician Connect'
State Spinal Cord Injury Service Extracts

1 September 2007

David Andrews is on long service leave and Jenni Johnson is acting as the SSCIS Manager for the next five months. For all matters relating to the SSCIS, please contact Jenni (*see contact details below*).

The NSW Office for Science and Medical Research (OSMR) has sponsored the third Spinal Cord Injury fellowship. Ms Edelle Fiede-Fote, Associate Professor of Physiotherapy and Neurological Surgery with the Miami Project to cure paralysis, has spent 5 weeks in Sydney sharing her knowledge and expertise on plasticity of the nervous system and the benefits of massed practice in promoting positive outcomes for clients. Her activities have been carried out mainly through the Rehabilitation Research centre, Sydney University, and the spinal injury units in Sydney. She has shared information and had the opportunity to collaborate with clinicians, scientists, institutions and undergraduates. Practical workshops have been made available to occupational therapists and physiotherapists working in the spinal area, but also more broadly, and she has delivered several lectures at the Universities and the Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute. She was formally welcomed by the OSMR, at a ministerial reception on 14 August 2007. Past experience has demonstrated that the benefits of the spinal exchange program for people with SCI and the clinicians who assist them are far-reaching and extend well beyond the period of the visit.

The new disability website '**disAbility Leisure, Arts, Sports and Lifestyle Web Guide**' (www.d-ability.org) was launched on 23 August 2007 at RRCS. This resource has practical benefits for all rehabilitation clients as well as families and friends and people with disabilities in the wider community. Kel Smith, the Recreation Officer at Moorong Spinal Unit, Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney, has been instrumental in the implementation of this site which has had extensive input from consumers in its development phase.

The GMCT Spinal Seating Professional Development Program which commenced in August 2006, is progressing well. Apart from educating many generalist clinicians throughout metropolitan Sydney and developing a sustainable product to provide face-to-face education services beyond the life of the project, it is now moving into a stage of developing web-based education packages for the prescription of wheelchairs. These resources will be linked to the Department of Health website. Parts of these learning modules will be launched by December 2007.

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1 August 2007

State Spinal Cord Injury Service Rural Service Development: the SSCIS Rural Spinal Service implementation plan is progressing well with five clinics and education sessions held in rural and remote towns since January 2007. On 1 August 2007, the next rural visit will include a two day clinic and an education session in Orange. Consultation and meetings with rural clinicians, hospital and Area Health Service managers have been productive and provided important information about how best to integrate rural spinal services with other rural initiatives.

At the GMCT Network Chairs and Co-Chairs Dinner held recently with the Minister for Health, the Hon. Reba Meagher and NSW Health Director General, Ms Debora Picone, the SSCIS Director, James Middleton, highlighted two important issues. Firstly, the significant discharge delays from the NSW Spinal Cord Injury Units that can arise due to the lack of timely access to personnel care services and accessible housing. Secondly, equity of access to the SSCIS for patients who have a non-traumatic spinal cord injury (NTSCI). It is known through project work by the SSCIS Outreach Service and from the literature that patients with NTSCI do not have equitable access to specialist spinal services.

Melbourne colleague Dr Peter New has estimated that the rate of NTSCI in Australia is greater than that for traumatic SCI. A survey by Peter New has determined that in Australia, 85% of rehabilitation and spinal medical specialists believe that NTSCI patients should be managed in a Spinal Cord Injury Unit or specialist neurological rehabilitation unit.

David Andrews, the current SSCIS Network Manager, is taking extended long service leave from 10 August 2007 to 18 January 2008. During this period, Ms Jenni Johnson will act in the position. Jenni can be contacted on (02) 98089666 or jenni.johnson@royalrehab.com.au

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1 July 2007

The creation and implementation of uniform protocols and best practice guides is an important aspect of the SSCIS work and form the backbone of the service's education programs. Currently there are twelve SSCIS clinical resources available to support health professionals in the management of spinal cord injuries. Current SSCIS resources include:

Autonomic Dysreflexia Treatment Algorithm

http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/downloads/specialty/sci_auto_dys_algorithm.pdf

Treatment of Autonomic Dysreflexia

http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/downloads/specialty/Auto_Dysreflexia2.pdf

Health Maintenance for Adults With Spinal Cord Injuries

http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/downloads/specialty/sci_health_maintenance.pdf

Managing Pain for Adults with Spinal Cord Injuries

http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/downloads/specialty/sci_managing_pain.pdf

Management of the Neurogenic Bladder for Adults with Spinal Cord Injury

http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/downloads/specialty/sci_neurogenic_bladder.pdf

Nutrition for Adults with Spinal Cord Injuries

<http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/downloads/specialty/nutrition.pdf>

Occupational Therapy Intervention for Adults with Spinal Cord Injury

http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/downloads/specialty/occupational_therapy.pdf

Physiotherapy exercises for people with spinal cord injury

<http://www.physiotherapyexercises.com/ExerciseSearch.aspx>

Psychological Adjustment after Spinal Cord Injury

http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/downloads/specialty/psychological_adjustment.pdf

Sex and fertility following Spinal Cord Injury

http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/downloads/specialty/sex_and_fertility.pdf

An Overview of Skin and Pressure Area Management

<http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/downloads/specialty/Skin.pdf>

Management of the Neuropathic Bowel

http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/downloads/specialty/Bowel_Booklet.pdf

Spinal Seating Service Resources:

About your contoured foam cushion <http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/downloads/specialty/usefoam.pdf>

About your jay cushion <http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/downloads/specialty/usejay.pdf>

About your ROHO Enhancer cushion and About your ROHO Quadro® Select® / Contour Select™ Cushion <http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/downloads/specialty/useroho3.pdf>

SSCIS clinical resources are available at the CIAP specialty websites

<http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/specialties/#s> or on the SSCIS website

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/gmct/spinal/resources.html>

Work is currently underway by the SSCIS to develop guides for the management of shoulder overuse syndrome and a more comprehensive guide to the management of pressure areas.

For services that do not have ready access to CIAP or the NSW intranet, these clinical resources are available from the SSCIS free of charge in CD-Rom format. An important aspect in the development and review of guides is feedback and evaluation from users. The SSCIS welcomes evaluations and suggestions about our clinical resources. An evaluation form is available on SSCIS website.

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1 June 2007

Spinal Cord Injury Chair: James Middleton

It is with great pleasure that the SSCIS welcomes Charisse Turnbull to the GMCT Spinal Seating Service Professional Development Program. Charisse is taking on the recently vacated role of Project Manager for the program. An experienced and specialist occupational therapist with extensive knowledge in the area of

seating and mobility, Charisse was most recently Manager of the Prince of Wales Hospital Seating Service. She also played an instrumental role in implementing the GMCT enhancements in this service. Over the past few years Charisse, in collaboration with colleagues, has focused on improving clinical standards and consumer access to specialist services.

ANZSCoS

Specialist workshops, public lectures and other special events are being planned to run in association with this year's Australian and New Zealand Spinal Cord Society (ANZSCoS) conference in Sydney. The scientific meeting program features an exciting array of national and international key note speakers and importantly, the workshops are aligned with the strategic directions of the SSCIS. Day-only registration will be available for all workshops to maximise opportunities for clinicians and consumers to not only gain specialist knowledge, but also to extend their networks with peers and colleagues. The conference program has been developed specifically to interest clinicians working across the broad disability sector. Clinicians in the Neurosurgery, Trauma and rehabilitation networks are encouraged to attend.

ANZSCoS is a multidisciplinary organisation which strives to meet the needs of its diverse membership. Workshop topics include: The First 72 Hours Post Spinal Cord Injury; Approaches to Fitness and Strength Training; Frontline Assessment and Management of Psychosocial Issues; and Supine to Sitting - Figuring Out a Functional Posture.

Further information about the conference and workshops is available from:

<http://www.conferenceaction.com.au>

The SSCIS 2006 Minimum Data Set (MDS) is now available at:

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/gmct/spinal/pdf/asci_reg.pdf It includes information about Spinal Cord Injury incident cases and readmissions within the SSCIS. The MDS has been prepared by Mr Obyad Marial with the support of the SSCIS data managers.

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1 May 2007

SSCIS Service Planning

The SSCIS clinicians, GMCT and service managers have commenced working with NSW Health, Statewide Service Development Branch, to create a "Statewide Plan for Spinal Cord Injury Services to 2012". The planning framework is aligned with broader planning processes such as the NSW State Health Plan and the NSW Rural Health Plan. The objectives are to identify clear directions for spinal cord injury service development, resource investment and workforce development. These will reflect an evidence-based approach to care and be developed in consultation with consumers, clinicians and other stakeholders. It is envisaged that the draft plan will be created by November 2007.

The SSCIS Psychosocial Working Group

Psychologists and Social Workers continue to meet monthly to address the psychosocial needs of people with spinal cord injuries. The group has determined that guidelines are required to support clinicians in this complex clinical area. Exploration is underway as to how best meet this need. Background information about psychosocial issues and spinal cord injury is available on the GMCT - SSCIS website see:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/gmct/spinal/projects.htm>

ANZSCoS

The Australian and New Zealand Spinal Cord Society (ANZSCoS) 2007 Annual Scientific Meeting will be held in Sydney between 1-3 November 2007. To meet the needs of a wide range of health professionals the conference has a diverse program reflective of the multidisciplinary nature of spinal cord injury services. Program Themes: Early Acute Management of Spinal Cord Injury; Seating therapies; Fitness and Exercise; and Psychosocial Issues. Workshop Topics are: "The first 72 hours post spinal cord injury", "Supine to sitting - figuring out a functional posture", "Frontline assessment and management of psychosocial issues" and "Approaches to fitness and exercise". Key Note Speakers are Prof Peter Wing from Canada and Ms Jean Minkel from the USA. Other invited speakers are Dr Annie McCluskey, A/Prof Louise Ada, A/Prof Greg Murphy, Ms Jenni Cole, Mr Dougie Herd, Ms Kathryn Nicholson Perry, A/Prof Philip Siddall and Prof Simon Gandevia.

This year's program will include selected ANZSCoS and associated SSCIS workshops which will be available for day-only registration. For a copy of the Registration Document & Call for Abstracts please contact: Ms Emma Waygood, Email: nzscos2007@conferenceaction.com.au. Further information will be

available from mid May 2007 at: www.conferenceaction.com.au

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1 April 2007

Launch of "Burn Rubber Burn" Exercise Program at Police & Community Youth Club, Campbelltown on March 15.

The program launch was held at the Police & Community Youth Club, Campbelltown. This was the first in what is envisaged as a series in gymnasiums across metropolitan Sydney which are designed to meet the needs of individuals with a spinal cord injury or like condition. A pilot project funded by the Greater Metropolitan Clinical Taskforce was conducted at the Prince of Wales Hospital in 2006. The pilot results demonstrated benefits for participants. Subsequent funding from the NSW Motor Accidents Authority has allowed the program to be extended to other centres. The Primary Club of Australia has provided support for the purchase of suitable gymnasium equipment for the Campbelltown Police & Community Youth Club (PCYC).

James Middleton noted that the exercise program is effective, affordable and assessable. He said that implementing this initiative in a community-based organisation demonstrated the benefit of networking resources and expertise across sectors. The program has resulted from a long held vision of Stella Engel, Joan Hume and Julia Batty from Prince of Wales Hospital, combined with the clinical expertise of the project team, the financial resources of the GMCT, the MAA and the Primary Club of Australia, and the facilities of the PCYC.

The launch was attended by program participants, project team members and supporters. Organisations represented at the launch included Macarthur Disability Service, Wheelchair Sports Association, Motor Accidents Authority of NSW, PCYC, GMCT, ParaQuad NSW, Spinal Cord Injuries Australia and the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney and media representatives from the Macarthur Chronicle newspaper and radio station C91.3. Their support was much appreciated.

The project team is working closely with the PCYC Executive to open a third site in the next few months. In the longer term other key partners such as Spinal Cord Injuries Australia and the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney have expressed a strong interest in including such a program in their service delivery models.

The Rural Spinal Cord Injury Service (RSCIS).

The new Rural Spinal Cord Injury Outreach Service is up and running with visits conducted in Coffs Harbour and Walgett. Planning is underway for a trip to Goulburn in late April. The rural service model includes holding multidisciplinary clinics for people with spinal cord injuries with a focus on health monitoring and maintenance issues, professional network development and multidisciplinary education sessions. This year 28 clients have been seen in the clinics and more than 70 health professionals and attendant care staff have attended education sessions.

Further information about the schedule for rural clinics and education sessions is available at: - <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/gmct/spinal/news/news.html> or contact Ms Melissa McCormick for further information at: rscis@royalrehab.com.au

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1 March 2007

The State Spinal Cord Injury Service wishes to congratulate Ms Melissa McCormick, Service Coordinator, Ms Kate Hocking, Occupational Therapist and Ms Cathy Shorland, Social Worker on their appointment to the Rural Spinal Cord Injury Service. Melissa, Cathy and Kate have experience and expertise in the management of spinal cord injuries having worked on projects within the SSCIS over the past 1-2 years. In partnership with the SSCIS Outreach Service the team is developing the Rural Service Implementation plan. The SSCIS has had the first in a series of planning meetings to review and further develop the model of care for spinal injuries in NSW. This process will lead to the creation of a statewide service plan for 2007 -2011. The first meeting established the framework, consultation process and time frame for the planning process. On 15 March, the *Burn Rubber Burn* program will be launched at Minto Police & Community Youth Club. New on the SSCIS website: Royal North Shore Spinal Plastics Clinic information pamphlet and updated referral flow chart for the management of pressure ulcers in spinal cord injuries.

Congratulations to Ms Margaret Samson CNC who was recently appointed to Prince of Wales Hospital Spinal Pressure Care Clinic.

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1 February 2007

The SSCIS has recently received recurrent funding from NSW Health Statewide Services Development Branch for the creation of the Rural Spinal Cord Injury Service (RSCIS). The RSCIS will initially focus on providing multi-disciplinary clinics and educational opportunities in rural NSW. In 2007, 8 or 9 rural visits are planned, with the first to Coffs Harbour February 13 -16. A program of

up-coming rural visits is available at: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/gmct/spinal/>

The first in a planned series of psychosocial forums and workshops was held on 6 December 2006 with more than 45 spinal clinicians attending from a broad range of services. The outcomes of the forum will be used to plan a strategy to better address the psychosocial needs of people who have acquired a spinal cord injury. The forum was a very valuable experience and highlighted the complex

psychosocial needs of people with a spinal cord injury and the impact on their families and health professionals.

The SSCIS Exercise Program is now available at the Campbelltown PCYC gymnasium. Health professionals who wish to refer clients to the program can contact Ms Simone Robinson-Di Francesco on Ph: (02) 93825623. Further information about the project is available at:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/gmct/pdf/burn.pdf> and
http://www.pcychnsw.org/moship/b_sparts_burnrubber.htm

Congratulations to Ms Louise Kelly on her appointment to the position of CNC at the Royal North Shore Hospital (RNSH) Spinal Cord Injury Unit. Louise was previously CNC for the Spinal Pressure Service at RNSH.

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1 December 2006

At the Australian & New Zealand Spinal Cord Society Scientific meeting in Melbourne on 17-18 November, the SSCIS GMCT Exercise Program for people with a spinal cord injury, "*Burn Rubber Burn*", was awarded the best presentation prize and the "*disABILITY, Leisure, Arts, Sports & Lifestyle Web guide*" won the best poster award—see: <http://www.d-ability.org>. Congratulations to presenter Ms Julia Batty and the project team: Simone Robinson-Di Francesco, Dr Stella Engel and David Andrews. Dr Gerard Weber presented a paper on his five year review of spinal cord & traumatic brain injury dual diagnosis patients. The SSCIS will focus on the management of dual-diagnosis and on improving access to exercise programs as it develops future models of care.

For details of publications and presentations, see:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/gmct/spinal/news/news.html>

Congratulations to James Middleton has been appointed to the Lifetime Care and Support Authority Advisory Council which will hold its first planning meeting in early December 2006.

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1 November 2006

Spinal

New information posted on the Spinal Injury Service website:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/gmct/spinal/news/news.html>

- A report on the outcomes of the Spinal Outreach Service Mattress Survey
- The Spinal Injury Nurses' Association Conference will be held 9 - 10 November 2006
- National Injury Surveillance Unit 2004 /2005 report summary

The Australia and New Zealand Spinal Cord Society (ANZSCoS) Scientific Conference 2006 will be held on 16-18 November 2006 at the Carlton Crest Hotel in Melbourne.

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