

PMG CONFERENCE 2015 – A THUMBNAIL SKETCH

In January 2015 I joined the Posture and Mobility Centre (PMC) team in Rochdale after ten years as an occupational therapist at Salford Royal Hospital.

Whilst my experience as a rotational therapist provided me with a wide variety of experiences, moving to a specialist wheelchair service has certainly presented a steep learning curve, both interesting and challenging in terms of the range of clients/conditions referred, assessments, the vast array of products available, and the procedures and processes in place.

ATTENDING THE PMG CONFERENCE, LEEDS 2015

The exhibition gave me the opportunity to see a range of products, meet representatives from the companies that PMC works with, and view demonstrations of particular wheelchairs and products that my senior is considering for certain clients.

THE PROCEEDINGS

FP1: Investigating the effect of ramped cushions on femoral orientation and pressure distribution.

Presenter: Caroline Newe.

Developing postural assessment skills is the foundation of all intervention leading on to seeking the appropriate equipment for clients. A variety of cushions is advantageous to help meet the needs of individuals; however the assessment, knowledge and evaluation skills are crucial, and I am realistic that this takes time, with re-evaluation necessary to establish outcomes. This presentation helped me focus on these factors and will help me with future cushion assessment and prescription.

FP2: Investigation of the adequacy of special seating service provision in Ireland

Presenter: John Tiernan

This presentation showed how service provision varies widely, and can be denser in some countries and areas and sparser in others. Central to this are professionals striving to provide and meet the needs of clients, often under the constraints and limitations of funding.

PS1: Manipulating weight-maximising efficiency - improving function with manual wheelchairs

Presenter: Jane Fontein

This presentation was particularly valuable in helping consider positioning and function regarding rear wheel setup and when this is necessary in relation to the individual's abilities, as opposed to over-prescribing this feature for health and safety requirements.

PS3: A practical exploration of shape capture techniques for custom contoured seating using vacuum formed bead bags

Presenters: Paul Dryer, Dave Long and Helen Nelson

The PMC service I work within run clinics with Ottobock. Specialist seating systems (Foam carves and Moulded Seat Inserts MSI) are assessed for and provided. Hence it was interesting to compare techniques and materials, and gain awareness of other services.

FP5: Powered wheelchair provision – improving criteria and assessment

Presenters: Nick Brown and Rhian Davies; Authors: Sophie Bool and Nick Brown

The sessions on the powered wheelchairs gave me the opportunity to consider my own experiential learning to date, and reflect and compare the services, assessment processes and delivery of such equipment. Powered wheelchair provision is a significant feature within the PMC service. The comprehensive pathway and processes have enabled me to learn in a methodical way, thus enabling me to understand the content of the sessions at PMG.

FP3: “The Unseatables”?

Presenters: Cate James and Peter Rowell; Additional author: Sally Pumphrey

This presentation highlighted just how innovative mobility services can be, and reiterated the necessity to consider situations from a broad perspective, especially in rare situations as in this case, where a supine position was supported on a wheelbase.

Aldersea Lecture 2015

Reflections on a career in assistive technology by Geoff Bardsley.

This lecture was interesting and inspiring with the speaker giving a subjective view of his own career and the changes he has witnessed in the field over the years. Geoff spoke with motivation and enthusiasm for the future of the posture and mobility industry which is inspiring for anyone still working, especially when in the early stages of employment within this service.

Conclusion

The PMG conference provided insights into a variety of subjects central to posture and mobility, and provided me with the opportunity to reflect on what I have learned so far, as well as giving an insight to other services.

Regarding CPD and current /future training needs, posture and mobility is such a vast subject that planning a comprehensive learning pathway within the service and pinpointing specific areas is required to ensure appropriate learning e.g. specialist assessments, paediatrics, powered processes.

The presentations at the PMG conference helped to consolidate my learning and also were a good reminder to consider cases from a broad perspective. What I noted especially were the commitment and enthusiasm of the professionals at the conference which must inevitably carry over into the services where they work.

The opportunity to attend was very helpful at this early stage of learning in my new role; hopefully I will have more experience to reflect on at the next PMG conference.

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