

A Neurophysiotherapist's View

As a neurophysiotherapist I have always felt the need for greater knowledge about the demanding environment of posture and mobility, because I deal on a daily basis with people with reduced mobility and consequent postural problems. I strongly believe in the 24 hour therapy approach, thinking outside the therapy session to engage with positioning and seating as part of a multidisciplinary team. I have also been keen to expand my knowledge about posture and mobility products, how to get the most out of them, and to troubleshoot when necessary. However, I had never had the opportunity to attend a posture and mobility conference until being awarded a bursary to attend the PMG 2015 conference in Leeds.

The event started with an inspiring talk from Dave Calver - *My OT journey: from client to provider*. Dave is an amazing person who is involved with programmes helping individuals with disabilities participate in adventure based activities. He doesn't believe in any limitations in life and certainly not in mobility. His organisation runs mobility skills programmes and train the trainer services for safe and effective wheelchair provision in many developing countries. His talk inspired me very much, and I have approached my colleagues in Turkey to see how a programme might be initiated there.

The conference was full of great seminars over two days although, unfortunately, I was only able to attend for the first day. I found the work about investigating the effect of ramped cushions on femoral orientation and pressure distribution interesting. In an attempt to categorize an optimal angle for efficient sitting, the researchers had used motion capture and pressure mapping to examine the effect of ramp angle on femoral orientation. This study marks a preparatory point in the identification of an optimal ramp angle for safe and effective sitting which is still unclear in the literature. There is a lack of research into the competence of special seating services across the country, and it's encouraging to see attempts being made at characterising special seating as the demand for such services is expected to develop.

Another interesting learning session for me was where casting methods were used to capture body shape through vacuum consolidation. This session provided an opportunity for sharing practice and ideas between clinical/technical staff and the manufacturers. It also provided delegates with hands-on experience of how to capture body shape using bean bags and vacuum, something I had never seen before.

A particularly informative session was the one including presentations on skin microclimate and back support shape. Learning about the use of sheepskin for skin protection, I recommended this to a gentleman with stroke. He was continuously getting pressure ulcers due to his elbow pressing down on his arm support; he used a sheepskin elbow protector and got better. I have also started assessing my clients' back supports in their wheelchairs, and now feel confident about suggesting different products.

Attending the PMG conference was one of the best CPD activities for me. It brought together delegates and exhibitors from across the country, and I feel privileged to have met so many great people working in the field. I have deepened my understanding of the rationale behind seating choices and therefore increased my confidence in postural management. There was a great range of equipment displayed, and I used every opportunity to browse new products in the exhibition times.

I would like to thank PMG for providing me with the bursary and also everybody else who helped and/or sponsored the conference this year.

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