

Wheelchairs Revisited

My clinical experience with wheelchairs began as a newly qualified occupational therapist working for six years in the Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre at Salisbury District Hospital: I worked with recently injured clients as well as those who had been injured for some time, and I was involved with both manual and powered wheelchairs. I then worked for two years with Bournemouth Intermediate Care, which gave me a broader knowledge and understanding of the challenges faced in the community.

I had only just changed jobs again to my current role when I was able to attend the PMG conference in only the second week of my new job! In addition, I was lucky enough to attend with several of the team with whom I now work, which was a great way to get to know my new colleagues. I was also able catch up with old faces, as well as meeting new ones....

The opening plenary from Dave Calver was inspirational and set the tone for the rest of the conference. Attending the very informative plenaries and parallel sessions enabled me to refresh some of my previous knowledge, and provided me with new information and ideas to guide my future practice. The sessions I attended were extremely thought-provoking, and there are several items and issues that I am working on currently as a direct result of what I learnt. It was pleasing too that, despite a couple of years' absence from this field, my memory and clinical reasoning related to wheelchairs were still relatively intact!

I was particularly impressed by the presentation on assessing cognitive ability prior to a practical assessment and, as a direct result, am now trialling a similar screening process for powered wheelchair provision.

The exhibition provided the opportunity to get 'hands on', especially to explore and examine some of the newest products on the market. I made great contacts in the industry, and even arranged further training. There were excellent poster presentations too which I was able to download with an app to read later - although I did need the help of a very kind person with downloading the app and showing me how to use it!

The lasting impression for me of the 2015 PMG conference was the passion shown throughout by presenters, exhibitors and delegates alike. The determination of everyone to provide an excellent service that is evidence-based and cost-effective, whilst ultimately meeting the needs of the clients, was an inspiration.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and admiration to PMG for the great organisation of the 2015 PMG conference to make it the success that it was.

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