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July 2016 was the first ‘Posture Mobility Group’ conference I have attended and I hope it won’t be the last. Attending the conference was a positive and eye opening experience. I was not only motivated by the knowledge of those whom gave the talks on various topics, but I was also astounded at the commitment and organisation of everyone involved in putting PMG together. Through taking notes in the conference room and talking to various different manufactures I was able to walk away with an increased knowledge and confidence in many aspects of posture and mobility, for this I am sincerely thankful.

As I am still fairly new to the wheelchair service, considering my prior job as a car mechanic, I’m trying to gain as much experience as possible where I can. Working under a ‘Senior Rehabilitation Engineer’, whom introduced me to the ‘Posture Mobility Group’, suggested this be the perfect next step in my quest for knowledge. As PMG stated their main aim was to share knowledge and promote good working practice, combined with an opportunity to apply for a bursary, I couldn’t resist! With this in mind, I was not disappointed.

Opening the ceremony and truly setting the tone for the event, was Ade Adepitain, representing ‘Go Kids Go’. His enthusiasm for the charity was inspiring! Their outlook toward young people in wheelchairs was inspirational, they aim to equip young wheelchair-users with the skills to help them reach their full potential and also to increase their confidence. Ade’s background and positive attitude was clearly shown during his performance and I look forward to using his stories and experiences to help me in the future.

Although all of the lectures were engaging I found one in particular has stood out as being knowledgeable and humorous, was Martin Gough. Through his work as a paediatric orthopaedic surgeon for Evelina London Children’s Hospital he was able to impart a vast amount of knowledge. I found his talk on spinal operations, that he has performed on young children, to particularly stand out. He stated his views and past experiences on posture correction, these views/experiences have stuck in my mind and will aid me in my job for many years to come.

As I am hoping to progress my career within wheelchair services I was fortunate enough to choose from two parallel sessions, which I feel will help me along the way. One of which was the World Health Organisation’s wheelchair service training package. When I started with the wheelchair service I was completing the original workbook which was very useful and I was very interested to see just how this had progressed. The main purpose of the training package is to develop the minimum skills and knowledge required by personnel involved in wheelchair service delivery. Such training has resulted in many deprived countries around the world in setting up a wheelchair service. Their step by step guide has resulted in a consistent service within each country. As it is my personal goal to help towards the consistent use/delivery of the UK wheelchair services I found this training programme particularly useful in my everyday practice.

The second session was based on the ‘Critical Appraisal of Scientific Evidence’ by Wendy Murphy. This session was particularly useful as it has given me a greater understanding of the level of evidence/research I would carry out in my degree. This is something I can use to help me further my career and educational aspirations in the future. However, for a kinaesthetic learner like myself I found this session difficult to follow, but still worth a visit.

I would most definitely attend this conference again in the future. The information and experiences gained through attending cannot and should not be missed by anyone in the industry. I am hoping to add this event to my annual calendar!

Many thanks,

Neil Aslaksen (Rehabilitation Engineer Technician)