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## REPORT ON LEVEL 1 LYMPHOEDEMA MANAGEMENT COURSE

From Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November until Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November, I attended the Level 1 Lymphoedema management course, held at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. I, and 15 other occupational therapists, physiotherapists and registered nurses from throughout Australia and New Zealand were fortunate enough to be taught the theory and techniques behind Complex Lymphoedema Therapy by Hildegard Reul-Hirche. Hildegard, a physiotherapist with the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, is regarded as an expert in the field of lymphoedema management. We were certainly not disappointed, as by the end of the week, course participants had learnt:

- ❖ History of lymphoedema management
- ❖ Anatomy of lymphatic system
- ❖ Physiology/patho-physiology of lymphatic system
- ❖ Subjective/Objective and physical assessment of clients with lymphoedema
- ❖ Classification and grading of lymphoedema
- ❖ Causes and features of primary and secondary lymphoedema, lipoedema and filariasis
- ❖ Components of Complex Lymphatic Therapy, including:
  - Education (client and carer)
  - Manual lymphatic drainage for trunk, upper and lower limbs
  - Compression bandaging for hands, arms, fingers and toes
  - Compression garments
  - Exercise
  - Skin care
  - Developing treatment plans for people with primary and secondary lymphoedema; and how to approach cases of lipoedema and filariasis
- ❖ Other additional treatment option E.g. laser therapy, sequential compression devices
- ❖ Lectures from guest speakers on physiology of lymphatic system, responding to the emotional concerns of clients with lymphoedema, compression garments and gynaecological cancer

This was an invaluable opportunity, as I now have the knowledge and skills required to treat people with lymphoedema using the evidence-based approach. This is of benefit to clients in my district, as they will be able to access the required services within their own area. Another advantage of this course was that I was able to get to know health professionals from many different backgrounds and experiences, thus expanding my awareness of professional opportunities in occupational therapy and Allied Health.

Since returning from my course, I have presented an in-service to my Allied Health co-workers. In 2008, I plan to develop educational resources for clients, carers and health professionals, and conduct in-services for health staff throughout the district. This will help ensure clients with lymphoedema are identified and linked in with the appropriate health professionals so they can receive the highest quality of care and enjoy a greater quality of life. Thank you to the Office of Rural Health for funding my attendance at this course – it has provided me with skills I will be able to use for many years to come!

**Nicola Cantoni, Qld Health Rural Scholarship Holder for Occupational Therapy  
Wide Bay Rural Allied Health Team (location: Gayndah Community Health)  
14<sup>th</sup> December, 2007**