Helping you help yourself with persistent pain management

One in five Australians lives with persistent pain. Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service is helping residents help themselves to manage their condition.

The Sunshine Coast Persistent Pain Management Service (PPMS) aims to support people living with complex persistent pain to manage their pain in collaboration with their G.P.

The PPMS recently celebrated a three year milestone, operating out of Waterfall Road in Nambour since September 2012.

Team Leader, Ms Huong Nguyen said the service taught those suffering with persistent pain that they could be in charge of their pain and live active, quality lives by learning how to manage their condition.

“Persistent pain, also known as chronic pain, is a serious and complex health condition,” Ms Nguyen said.

“It is classified as pain that persists beyond expected tissue healing time, which is typically three months after an initial injury or trauma. However, in some cases there is no trigger or cause.

“We help our patients to gain an increased understanding of persistent pain, which brings a sense of empowerment, of being in control of the pain; improved physical functioning; improved coping skills; and improved confidence in living life with pain.”

There are currently approximately 800 active patients who use the service, through multiple pathways which reflect the complexity and self-management approach to the management of persistent pain. These include workshops, individual appointments with doctor and allied health professionals, multidisciplinary allied health appointments and appointments with our clinical nurse and Alcohol and Other Drugs (ATODS).

“The services we have here are based on the self-management approach as the goal is to have patients become active managers in their own healthcare,” Ms Nguyen said.

Brendan’s story

Brendan Considine was referred to the Persistent Pain Management Service by his G.P. and Orthopaedics for pain management of his right foot. He developed persistent pain following a broken bone in his right foot. His healing was further complicated by a loss of blood supply to the affected bone.

Mr Considine attended the PPMS introduction to pain management course, mindfulness course, and the patient rehabilitation education program.
“The courses in pain management have most definitely made a difference; I was a bit apprehensive before starting but once in the group sessions, I felt very comfortable,” Mr Considine said.

“I have gained a great range of strategies to deal with my pain every day. Without these pain management strategies, I was struggling to cope.

“The most important lesson I have gained from all of this is, ‘What you think matters’. I know I can live with my pain and I can manage it now.

“I have been very fortunate to be a part of a great group of people in the classes. We now meet at regular pool sessions for hydrotherapy and get together for a coffee and a chat, which all helps.

“I could not say enough in gratitude to the very professional and dedicated staff at PPMS.”

The PPMS clinical team includes psychologists, a physiotherapist, occupational therapists, an allied health assistant, a clinical nurse consultant and pain medicine specialist doctors.

Because the causes of persistent pain are complex, so too are the treatments required. Approaches used to relieve and help with pain include physiotherapy, psychology and personal training in pain management skills, occupational therapy and assistance with returning to the workforce and appropriate activity levels, pain relieving medications and procedural interventions if indicated.

Anyone living with persistent pain who would like to learn how to better manage their condition is eligible to receive a service at the PPMS; all you need is a referral by your G.P.


The Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service Persistent Pain Management Service is located at 6-8 Waterfall Road, Nambour, 4560. Tel 5470 6785 or 5370 3577, email SC-persistentpain@health.qld.gov.au

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Media contact: Kirsty Olsen | phone 5470 6616 | mobile 0408 713 747

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