

# Spinal Outreach Team Newsletter

Issue 16, January 2013



Welcome to 2013! Everyone here at SPOT wishes you, your family and friends a Happy New Year and hope you find something of interest in this edition of SPOT's annual newsletter.

## Goal Planning: Key to Teamwork in Rehabilitation



Geoff and a rehabilitation facilitator, Storm

**"The key part of the process that impressed me was the teamwork of the staff which strengthened the process and improved the outcomes."**

### Contained in this issue:

Goal Planning in the SIU	1
National Health Services Directory	1
Art for Spine	2
Peer Support on Facebook	2
Accessing Dietetic Services	2
SPOT Research Update	3
Service Provider Education 'On Demand'	3
Regional Visit Schedule	4
Autonomic Dysreflexia: New medical emergency card	4

In December 2012, the Spinal Injuries Unit (SIU) completed a project which saw the successful implementation of a new "patient centred goal planning" rehabilitation program.

This new approach means rehabilitation programs are now tailored to an individual's specific needs. As part of this new program each patient and their family meets regularly with their whole rehabilitation team where they identify personal goals and develop a plan to achieve these goals.

SIU patients are now assisted through their rehabilitation journey by a personal Rehabilitation Facilitator. The Facilitator will help the patient determine their personal priorities and will coordinate the meetings with the Rehabilitation Team.

Geoff Haigh who was discharged from the Spinal Injuries Unit in November 2012 had this to say about the new type of rehabilitation program:

*"It opened my mind to feasible objectives for this new way of life I've got. When I first started goal planning I thought these people should know more than I but as the process developed, I was happy to participate in an active way. I could see the goals were meaningful for me. The key part of the process that impressed me was the teamwork of the staff which strengthened the process and improved the outcomes."*

SIU staff will continue to review the new rehabilitation program and make changes as needed to ensure it runs smoothly and achieves the best outcomes for patients.



The National Health Service Directory (NHSD) is also available as an app for iPhone or Android users.

The Australian Government has launched a new website that can help you find health services like general practitioners, pharmacists, hospitals and emergency departments.

In 2013 the NHSD will extend to include allied health and human services. Check out this website for more information.

<http://www.nhsd.com.au/>



## ART for SPINE

Now into its second year, the ART for SPINE art and fashion auction (which raises funds for improved technologies and equipment at the SIU) was again a huge success. Organiser Jocelyn Bartlem was very pleased with the turnout and the generosity of all who attended. *"It was a huge collaborative effort by all involved and we amazingly raised close to \$60,000. Thankfully the wonderful people from the PA Foundation have graciously decided to organise the event again here in Brisbane in early November 2013. With any luck this will continue on as an annual event."*

October 14th was a fantastic night, with a great outcome both in awareness and financial terms. With more than 500 attendees & bidders this year, plus an army of people who set up and volunteered throughout the event at Lightspace.

Jocelyn has decided to return home to Perth in February. After taking 2013 off, she will bring the auction to Perth for the first time in 2014. *"It is my hope that more cities across Australia take it on in coming years too. Whilst I will still be involved in next years November auction in Brisbane, I look forward to handing the reigns to Kylie Hay from the PA Foundation and Finbar Mills who will take on my role."*

The next auction will be on Sunday November 3rd 2013.

If you'd like more information about the fundraising event, check out [www.artforspine.com](http://www.artforspine.com) or contact Kylie Hay : [Kylie\\_Hay1@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Kylie_Hay1@health.qld.gov.au)



Jocelyn Bartlem with some of the art work auctioned at Art for Spine 2012

The next auction will be on Sunday 3rd November, 2013.



## Peer Support on Facebook



Col Mackereth, Peter Harre and Katie Franz have more than 80 years of experience of living with a spinal cord injury between them. The most common questions they get range from sexual function, bowels and bladder, getting back to work, driving a car to just general chitchat and problem solving ideas.

The Peer Support team has its own private group on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/peer-support-spinal-injuries-association), boasting more than 150 members including people who are newly injured, people up to 30 years down the track, friends and family of people with a spinal cord injury. These people have a massive bucket-load of information on so many different subjects. This page is used to network, not only with Peer Support but with other people from all over Australia (and a few from overseas) with a spinal cord injury.

Type 'Peer Support – Spinal Injuries Association' into the search bar in Facebook and send a request to be added to the group!

For more information, please [contact the Spinal Injuries Association](http://www.spinalinjuries.org.au)

Peer Support Coordinators:  
Peter Harre, Col Mackereth & Katie Franz  
(pictured left to right)

## Accessing Dietetic Services

A study published this year in the journal, *Rehabilitation Nursing*, showed that individuals with spinal cord injury frequently visit their GP seeking access to services relating to health promotion such as exercise, nutrition and stress management.

It can be hard to navigate through the community health services available in different areas, including dietetic services. We're trying to make this easier by developing a **how-to guide for health professionals and consumers** outlining the different dietetic services in your community and how you can access them.

Keep your eyes peeled for the guide on the Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service website – it's coming soon!

**Amy Nevin**  
(Accredited Practising Dietitian)  
Spinal Injuries Unit  
Princess Alexandra Hospital



## Research and development activities help to drive change

At SPOT we are always looking to gather information that will help us to make positive changes to the way we run our service. This year we have examined three questions related to our service provision. They are:

1. Are people with SCI using their environmental control units and if not, why not?
2. When do community nurses seek help for wound care for their clients with SCI?
3. What are the outcomes of custom seating interventions provided by SPOT in conjunction with the Rehabilitation Engineering Service?

### *Utilisation of environmental control units (ECUs)*

An ECU is an electronic device that enables a person with limited hand function to independently control items within their environment such as the television, lights, fan, air conditioning, telephone, electric bed and automatic door. We want to know whether these devices continue to be useful in the years after spinal cord injury, and if not, then why are they abandoned. Our research assistant, Emily Nalder, interviewed 15 people who have ECUs to find out if they still use them, what they use them for or why they don't use them. The information from the interviews will be analysed in 2013. The information we gain from this research will shape the way we approach this type of equipment prescription.

### *When do community nurses seek help?*

We designed a survey to explore factors that influence when a nurse refers to SPOT for advice on wound care. We were interested in what prompts nurses to refer to SPOT. Do the factors relate to the complexity of the case or does personality, expectations or previous relationships with SPOT play a part?

Fifty nurses have answered our survey and we have commenced analysing this data.

### *Evaluations of complex seating*

SPOT is continuing to evaluate our seating interventions with clients after they have had custom seating manufactured through the Rehabilitation Engineering Centre (REC) at RBWH. We will be collecting this data until June 2013. Some interesting information is already emerging.

People we have followed up described many other issues in their lives which impacted on their ability to stick with seating regimes and monitor their outcomes. So we realise that the ideal seating regime is not always possible. Some of the people we have interviewed feel that they have gained enough knowledge about seating to make their own decisions when faced with an adverse event. This is important for us to know and means we must give people plenty of information when they are prescribed new seating solutions. We also got feedback from people that the follow up phone calls were themselves valuable as a reminder to monitor equipment and status and check that action items had been carried out.



## Service provider education 'on demand' for 2013

SPOT is available to provide short format videoconferences and inservices on topics related to the community management of spinal cord injury. In 2013 SPOT's professional development program will be offered 'on demand' at a time to suit you. We can provide education either face to face or via videoconference. Contact SPOT to book us in to your 2013 professional development program now!



### E-Learning

We have taken a little longer grappling with the technology to put our education into a new e-learning format. But we are persevering and hope to have our first packages up on the QSCIS website in 2013. We will be keen to hear what you think. Each package will include a link with the option to complete a brief evaluation survey.

Posture and seating Part 1: The nuts and bolts

Wound care in the community setting

Shower chair seats: Features and options

Supporting clients to manage change and set goals

If you would like to receive information electronically from SPOT  
email: [spot@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:spot@health.qld.gov.au) and request to be added to the SPOT email list.

## REGIONAL VISITS 2013

Check out this year's schedule for when we will be in your area.

Area	Week Of
Roma, Dalby and West	4 <sup>th</sup> February, 2013
Toowoomba & Pittsworth	18 <sup>th</sup> February, 2013
Mackay (South to Sarina & North to Bowen)	11 <sup>th</sup> March, 2013
Rockhampton & West, Emerald & Dysart	15 <sup>th</sup> April, 2013
Cairns & northern regions (incl. Cape)	29 <sup>th</sup> April, 2013
Bundaberg & Monto	20 <sup>th</sup> May, 2013
Townsville, Mt Isa (incl. Palm Island)	3 <sup>rd</sup> June, 2013
Longreach, Winton & surrounding region	17 <sup>th</sup> June, 2013
Stanthorpe, Warwick and West	15 <sup>th</sup> July, 2013
Kingaroy, Murgon, Gayndah & Mundubbera	29 <sup>th</sup> July, 2013
Cairns & South to Cardwell (Tully and Mt Garnet)	26 <sup>th</sup> August, 2013
Nambour & north of Nambour to Gympie	16 <sup>th</sup> September, 2013
Gladstone, Biloela, Theodore and Bundaberg	14 <sup>th</sup> October, 2013
Hervey Bay and Maryborough	11 <sup>th</sup> November, 2013



### New Medical Emergency Card

Autonomic dysreflexia is a serious complication that affects people with SCI at or above the 6th thoracic level. The Spinal Injuries Unit has recently reviewed the Medical Emergency Card for Autonomic Dysreflexia and updated the medications used for treatment. To see the latest information of the treatment of Autonomic Dysreflexia, [click here](#).

#### Spinal Outreach Team Contact Details

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