

Fact Sheet

Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service

SPINAL INJURIES UNIT

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OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT

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Postal and Location

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TRANSITIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

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SPINAL OUTREACH TEAM

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Information for General Practitioners: Primary care for adults with spinal cord injury

This fact sheet outlines:

- Common issues encountered by General Practitioners (GPs) managing the primary health care needs of people with spinal cord injury (SCI).
- How to access specialist medical information and advice to assist in the ongoing health management of people with SCI.

Background:

People with SCI have complex long-term health management needs and utilise health care services more frequently than the general population. Due to the low incidence of SCI, it is possible there may be very few or no patients known to a particular general practice group. GPs play an important role in coordinating the care of people with SCI and linking them with multiple health care services.

Common issues encountered in the primary care of SCI:

People with SCI may present to their GPs with various concerns related to their disability. These include:

- Skin care and management of pressures injuries
- Pain and spasm management
- Bone health
- Sexuality and fertility
- Bowel and bladder management
- Autonomic dysreflexia and blood pressure management
- Joint and muscle problems
- Psychological health
- Obtaining equipment and services

How the Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service can help:

The Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service (QSCIS) is comprised of the inpatient Spinal Injuries Unit (SIU) and two community-based teams: the Transitional Rehabilitation Program (TRP) and the Spinal Outreach Team (SPOT). These community services are established multidisciplinary teams with a strong focus on restoration of function by providing goal directed episodes of patient centred care.

The TRP provides active goal directed rehabilitation immediately after discharge from the SIU at Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane. SPOT provides a consultation service to established clients and their health professionals in the community.

The community SCI registrar is a senior Rehabilitation Medicine trainee, who works with TRP and SPOT. They are available to provide information and advice during business hours from Monday to Friday and can be contacted on 3176 9507.

The community registrar can be contacted by:

- People with spinal cord injury known to QSCIS.
- Carers and family members of people with spinal cord injury known to QSCIS.
- GPs and other health professionals working with people with spinal cord injury known to QSCIS.

For urgent issues after hours, patients should contact their GP or attend their nearest hospital emergency department. For patients known to QSCIS but not seen in the SIU Outpatient Department for over 12 months, new referrals must be made via the Metro South Central Referral Hub. GPs can now register to access their patients' Queensland Health records via the Health Provider Portal.

Useful resources: A range of information specific to SCI management, including fact sheets on bowel and bladder management, are available on the QSCIS website.

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