WHEELCHAIR MANAGEMENT IN ACUTE CARE: FROM INVENTORY TO INNOVATION

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Introduction: Effective resource management has long been promoted in healthcare, but emergent issues act as drivers of change, abruptly modifying practice. The management of a wheelchair and seating equipment pool at a tertiary hospital demonstrates the need to meet environmental demands in a way that is systematic, yet flexible and responsive in the face of new contingencies. Objectives: This presentation will recount four distinct phases in mobility system management over one decade: 1) creation of an inventory-tracking system, facilitating the development of a multi-year equipment enhancement and replacement plan; 2) initiation of an annual maintenance program to ensure the safety of occupational therapy mobility equipment, and meet multiple regulatory requirements; 3) development of infection control policies and procedures in the wake of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS); and 4) design and fabrication of new seating products to minimize the risk of transmission of hospital-acquired infections.

Approach: A review of these developments will focus on two imperatives: 1) the need for a systematic equipment management plan based upon foundational policies and procedures; and 2) the development of stakeholder partnerships to create and maintain institutional and culture change. Current policies and procedures that support this management system will be provided.

Practice Implications: Without a well-designed, integrated equipment management plan, sustainable change, and effective, rapid response to varied system drivers cannot occur.

Conclusions: The effective management of equipment that supports occupational therapy practice serves as the basis for excellent, safe and client-centered care, and demonstrates accountable leadership in Canadian healthcare.

Speaker Bios

Andrea Dyrkacz works in University Health Network's Krembil Neurosciences Program, with a special focus in the area of spinal cord injury. She is actively involved in post-professional education, particularly in the integration of internationally educated occupational therapists into Canadian clinical practice, and in the education of occupational therapist assistants.

Alanna Davis is a graduate of Queen's University where she acquired her Master's of Science in Occupational Therapy. She has been employed with University Health Network since 2007. Her areas of clinical expertise are within General Internal Medicine, Geriatrics, Discharge Planning and Cognitive Assessment. Alanna has embraced leadership opportunities as Student Fieldwork Coordinator for Toronto General Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital and most recently as the interim Practice Leader for the Occupational Therapy group at Toronto Western Hospital.

Candy Pleasance works at UHN's Toronto Western Hospital, with a focus on providing clinical services in the Krembil Neurosciences Program. She is actively involved in post professional education for occupational therapist and physiotherapist assistants, and is engaged in research related to educational programming for these clinicians.