

# Therapy in paediatric burns - the cost of quality burn care

Claire Toose<sup>1</sup>, Stephanie Wicks<sup>1</sup>, Cheri Templeton<sup>1</sup>, Elizabeth Anderson<sup>1</sup> A/Prof. John Harvey<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Physiotherapist, The Children's Hospital at Westmead, Locked Bag 4001, Westmead, NSW, 2145 [claire.toose@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:claire.toose@health.nsw.gov.au)

<sup>2</sup> Department Head, Paediatric Burns Unit, The Children's Hospital at Westmead, Locked Bag 4001, Westmead, NSW, 2145

Burns units all over the world seek to provide quality medical, surgical, allied health and psychosocial care for every patient. Staff work tirelessly to meet the demand and ensure each patient receives the best treatment in order to optimise outcome following burn injury. As the incidence of paediatric burns rises, therapy services are spread thin and the question arises - what is the cost of providing quality burn care, both economically and in terms of personnel?

Physiotherapists at The Children's Hospital at Westmead have collected detailed data of their burns service provision - occasions of service, time spent in hands on treatment of individual patients, time spent in burns related administration tasks, time spent coordinating case management, comparison of inpatient and outpatient service provision, and overtime hours worked in order to meet patient demand. Our burns unit is staffed with three full time equivalent Physiotherapists, each of whom have recorded detailed data on how every minute of every work day has been spent over a one month period. The aim in doing this was to establish what percentage of therapist time was spent in the clinical management of patients, what percentage was spent in non clinical management of patients and what percentage was spent in other areas. We also aimed to establish the average length of therapy treatment time and occasions of service afforded to burns patients in inpatient versus outpatient settings, and of acute burns versus long term scar management patients.

We plan to look at trends in current service provision, analyse data in terms of the growth of our service and identify potential challenges in ensuring quality care for all patients if occasions of service continue to increase in the future. We are passionate about providing consistently high quality therapy treatment for every paediatric burns patient who comes through our unit, however as patient numbers increase what cost is this care having on the work load of individual therapists, the functioning of the burns unit entity and the health system as a whole?

## Key Words

Burn, Paediatric, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, service provision, cost

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