



Melissa Webb

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Bio

Melissa has over 25 years of clinical practice in Trauma Physiotherapy at the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne, where she currently works as the Allied Health Team Leader in Trauma and Orthopaedics. She has been integral in the development of a specialised trauma physiotherapy service at the Alfred and has provided consultation to other services who wish to develop a similar model of care. Within her current role she has assisted in the development and co-ordination of a specialised allied health workforce providing an intensive therapy model of care for acute trauma and orthopaedic patients.

Melissa has completed a Masters in Health Science, Graduate Certificate in Burn and Trauma Rehabilitation and a number of dedicated trauma professional development courses. She has also completed a clinical fellowship analysing the practice of physiotherapists in major trauma centres in the US, Germany and Switzerland. Her special interests include chest trauma management, trauma models of care and the role of physiotherapy and allied health within the acute trauma multidisciplinary team.

Abstract

Trauma Physiotherapy - a step in the right direction

Trauma is the leading cause of lost years of life and productivity in young adults and numerous studies including meta-analysis have confirmed a significant reduction in mortality when care is provided at a Level 1 Trauma Centre. It is estimated that for every trauma fatality, there are between three and four survivors who are permanently impaired and so interventions, therapies and models of care that selectively improve the quality of life in survivors could be as valuable as those that decrease mortality.

The profile and care of the trauma patient is evolving. An increase in elderly trauma, changes in patient assessment, imaging capabilities, pre-hospital processes, management systems, human resources and infrastructure are all leading to improved care for the injured patient. However, alongside this is increasing pressure from organisations to maintain capacity by reducing length of stay, while still maintaining standards and consistency of care and improving patient outcomes.

From acute inpatient phases through to community reintegration, physiotherapists work to improve physical function and quality of life post injury. They possess a diverse range of skills and knowledge across all physiologic systems; perfectly placed to address the multi faceted sequelae of traumatic injuries. With complex injuries, increases in elderly presentations, multi system morbidity and recovery needs; trauma provides the perfect environment for

physiotherapists to demonstrate their expertise, skill and utility. This presentation will explore how the changes in trauma care has driven the development of a clinical sub-specialty for physiotherapy expertise and how we are uniquely positioned to address the diverse needs and challenges of the injured patient.