

Neuro Rehab Results Newsletter

June 3, 2011

Vol. 2, issue 3



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Arm Clinic

*Arm clinic will be running regularly on Mondays
from the 20th of June from
1pm – 3pm.*

*If you are interested in attending arm clinic,
please contact Sue in the clinic to make a
booking.*

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What's been happening?



Neuro Rehab Results is on Facebook! On our Facebook page you will find a number of different links to interesting articles, stories and websites as well as a few photos of what we get up to around here. It is also a place for our Facebook friends to post relevant links and comments.

If you are on Facebook, checkout our Facebook page, you might even 'Like' us.

Ever Heard of Neural Plasticity?

One of the things that we are interested in as therapists is neural plasticity. This is essentially the brains amazing ability to alter, adapt and learn in response to a person's experience due to injury, illness or other changes. Neural plasticity is the way that the brain encodes and learns new ways of doing things. For each new learning event, there is a change within the nervous system that supports that learning.

Following brain injury neural plasticity becomes very important. It is the way the damaged brain relearns lost function in response to rehabilitation. The brain compensates for damage by forming new connections between intact neurons (nerve cells). These formations are stimulated through activity.

Have you ever heard the term "use it or loose it"? In order to improve and give your brain the best chance at re-organising itself, participation in activity and using the function you have available is key.

References:

Kleim & Jones. (2008). Principles of Experience-dependent neural plasticity: Implications for rehabilitation after brain damage. *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research* 51: S225-239.

Lundy-Ekman, L. (1998) *Neuroscience Fundamentals for Rehabilitation*. Philadelphia: W.B Saunders Company.

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This month we caught up with Sharon Barnett – Jensen, Parent Liaison for YES Disability Resource Centre to find out a bit more about what they have on offer.

Our Vision at 'Yes' is to actively support disabled people to enable them to take maximum control of their own lives, to seek out opportunities and achieve their full potential as individuals within the community.

You will find 'Yes' within the Lion Foundation House Building along with other organizations which share a connection to the disability sector, such as Manawanui In Charge (Individualised Funding), Waitemata Child Health and Development, Taikura Trust, Renaissance, Brain Injury Auckland, Muscular Dystrophy, FADE, and Hearing Therapy and Mobility Dogs. This hub has created a wonderful synergy between service providers allowing greater community access to information.

What services are on offer at 'Yes'?

- Disability Information & Advice (DIAS)
- Assistive Products for Sale and Hire
- Online Shopping
- Carabiner Youth Mentoring Programme (fabulous programme for mentors and mentorees, it's a real winner).
- Accessible Meeting Room Hire
- Community Presentations (i.e. Auckland Disability Law have a talk on Welfare Guardianship)
- Network Meetings
- Free Resource Booklets
- Mum's @ Yes Support and Information

Contact Details:

Yes Disability Products Shop & Resource Centre
3 William Laurie Pl, Albany
Phone: 09 414 5360
Email: info@yesdisability.org.nz
Website: www.disabilityproducts.co.nz

Mums @ Yes

Sharron Barnett – Jensen started the 'Mums @ Yes' Information Swap Network for parents, caregivers and whanau of children, adults and teenagers with special needs. Sharron is a parent of two beautiful girls, one of whom has special needs, Jessica is now 20 years old.

Sharron asks the question, "Why is it that we have to literally 'hit the wall' before anyone volunteers the information like "you might be entitled to a cleaner 2 x hours a week, or your child / teenager is entitled to cheaper taxi fares through Total Mobility Services, and gosh, you can also ring the Cerebral Palsy Society and receive extra dosh towards Taxi fares, they will even throw in a considerable amount towards setting up a Trust Fund."

The purpose of the group is to create an informal gathering for people to swap information that has been collected along the way, in the hope that it will make life just that little bit easier for someone else, and maybe ourselves too. This also creates the opportunity to meet and make friends with people that are in potentially similar circumstances.

Mums @ Yes meets bi-monthly. If you would like to attend please contact Sharron for more information
Phone: (direct dial) 448 0561
Email: sharron@yesdisability.org.nz

Useful Websites

Be. Accessible
www.beaccessible.org.nz Your guide to accessibility in Auckland

Rehab Rental
www.rehabrental.co.nz & 0800 336 339
Suppliers of rehabilitation and home healthcare equipment for rental.

Age Concern
www.ageconcern.org.nz
Serving the needs of older people.

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Therapist Spotlight: Suzie Mudge

Suzie is the director of Neuro Rehab Results. This month we caught up with her for our 'Therapist Spotlight'.

Tell us how you got started in physiotherapy.

I didn't really know what I wanted to do when I left school, but decided that I wanted something science based but working with people. After looking at becoming a vet, optometrist or pharmacist, I finally thought about physiotherapy. Once I started the course, I really enjoyed it, so that settled my indecision!

Where have you worked and what have you done in your career as a physiotherapist?

When I first graduated, I worked in the United States. I worked in an inner city hospital in Detroit, Michigan, where I quickly learnt about gunshot wounds – the number one cause of brain injury and spinal cord injury in urban US cities. I worked there for three years and came back to Auckland after a bit of travelling. I worked at the Laura Fergusson Trust while I completed my Masters. Then I joined the Neuro Rehab Results practice in 2001. I worked full time here until 2005 when I started my PhD at the University of Auckland, which I completed in 2009. I now work at AUT University halftime and spend the other half at Neuro Rehab Results.

What sorts of things do you do as a physio at Neuro Rehab?

Generally physios help people improve their movement in order to improve their ability to do meaningful activities. For example, we use a combination of exercise and practice of specific tasks to improve someone's ability to walk, balance and use their arms.

Who might benefit from physio input?

Anyone with a neurological condition who has a goal to improve some aspect of their movement or function. Input can range from a one off session to more intensive sessions where we might see someone three times a week on an ongoing basis. We often set up programmes people can do at home or at the gym, which is especially important if people are unable to come into the clinic.

What do you really enjoy about your job?

I like most aspects of my job! I love working with people and I like the challenge of working out how to improve recovery in the brain. This is an area that health scientists are continually finding out more about and so therapists try and stay up to date with research findings. One of the advantages of working at AUT university as well is that I'm involved in rehabilitation research. Treating patients at the clinic raises lots of questions and it means I'm in a good position to attempt to find some answers.

Since Anne left at the end of 2010, I'm the only director now at Neuro Rehab Results. This means that I also need to spend some time doing administration and management. All these things together make my job pretty varied and interesting.

If you would like to make an appointment to see any of our physios, please call the office on 09 4806464 to book an appointment.

