



# PSYCHOSOCIAL NEWS:

## The SSCIS Psychosocial Strategy for People with a Spinal Cord Injury Newsletter

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JULY 2014

The role of the psychosocial strategy is to assist you in gaining the knowledge and skills you need to effectively support the psychosocial wellbeing of people with SCI .

You know and understand what works for you in your practice setting, so your thoughts and ideas can make a difference.

If you have any ideas on what could assist you in your practice, if you would like to be further involved in specific working groups or have any comments about the strategy, your input is welcome! Please contact your representative on the Steering Group to feedback your thoughts and ideas, or contact the Chair of the Steering Group directly.

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### When SCI Affects YOU !! by Mathew Smith

ParaQuad NSW has a long-standing commitment to supporting people with spinal cord injuries achieve their potential. In 2012, ParaQuad gained funding from the Lifetime Care and Support Authority to review and update a series of Fact Sheets titled “When Spinal Injury Affects You”.

The 21 fact sheets are designed to provide clear and concise information for people with a spinal cord injury, their family, friends, carers and clinicians. The information covers a

wide range of topics and provides contact details on where to find more information. All fact sheets were peer reviewed and developed in collaboration professionals from the spinal cord injury network in NSW.

The fact sheets are available for download at <http://www.paraquad.org.au/> and via an **App** available on iTunes.

**For hard copies please contact :** Spinal Wellbeing Service at ParaQuad

### A prospective study of the occurrence of mental disorders and co-morbidities following spinal cord injury

Ashley Craig, K. Nicholson Perry, Rebecca Guest, Yvonne Tran Annalisa Dezarnaulds, Alison Hales, Catherine Ephraums, James Middleton\*

A prospective study of the occurrence of mental disorders and co-morbidities following SCI has been conducted to determine predictors of mental disorders six months after discharge.

Participants included 88 adults with SCI admitted over a two year period to two SCI Units. Longitudinal assessment occurred up to six months after discharge. A structured psychiatric interview was conducted to determine presence of mental disorders and demographic, psychological and injury variables were also assessed.

Results showed that rates of mental disorder up to six months post-

discharge were substantially higher than community rates. Predictive factors included education, pre-morbid psychiatric/psychological treatment, cognitive impairment, secondary complications, resilience and anxiety.

The findings indicate SCI has a substantial negative impact on mental health that does not change over time, suggesting that increased resources should be invested into improving the mental health of adults with SCI.

A paper presenting results of this study in detail has been submitted for publication.

### Do you need something more?

For further resources on psychosocial aspects of SCI visit [www.health.nsw.gov.au/gmct/spinal/resources.asp](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/gmct/spinal/resources.asp) where you can download the *Guide for Health Professionals on the Psychosocial Care of People with SCI* and the *Directory of Information and Support*

For further information on the work of the Psychosocial Strategy Steering Group contact Annalisa Dezarnaulds via email: [annalisa.dezarnaulds@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:annalisa.dezarnaulds@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au)



## SSCIS Psychosocial Steering Committee - Update

The Steering Committee oversees the implementation of the SSCIS Psychosocial Strategy, and all units and community organizations are invited to send a representative. Current representatives include:

- ◆ Chairperson - Annalisa Dezarnaulds (Chair), Senior Clinical Psychologist, SCI Unit, Prince of Wales Hospital (POWH) - [annalisa.dezarnaulds@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:annalisa.dezarnaulds@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au)
- ◆ James Middleton, Director, SSCIS - [james.middleton@sydney.edu.au](mailto:james.middleton@sydney.edu.au)
- ◆ Catherine Ephraums, Clinical Psychologist, SCI Unit, Royal Rehab
- ◆ Alex Ommanney, Social Worker, Spinal Outreach Service, Royal Rehab
- ◆ Neil McKinnon, Manager, Lifetime Care Support Authority (LTCSA)
- ◆ Michael Magro, Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (SCIA)
- ◆ David Coren, Peer Support Officer, ParaQuad NSW, Newcastle branch
- ◆ Dr Robert Berman, Consultation Liaison Psychiatrist, Royal North Shore Hospital (RNSH)
- ◆ Helen Tonkin, Social Worker, RNSH
- ◆ Jacqueline Smith, Psychologist, Hunter SCI Service (HSCIS)

We sadly farewell 2 long-standing members - Frances Monypenny and Tonina Harvey. We thank them both for their never ending contributions and hard work and wisdom,. We welcome Consultation Liaison Psychiatrist, Dr Robert Berman and ParaQuad NSW Peer Support Officer David Coren.

## What's new?

### ⇒ **UPDATED Psychosocial Resources**

Psychosocial Resources have recently been updated and are available on the SPINAL CORD INJURY RESOURCES page of the ACI website <http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/spinal-cord-injury/resources>

Network Manager - Frances Monypenny on [Frances.Monypenny@aci.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Frances.Monypenny@aci.health.nsw.gov.au)

### ⇒ **JUST ONE THING website**

Rick Hansan, Neuropsychologist and best selling author of *Hardwiring Happiness* has a free newsletter - *Wise Brain Bulletin* offering skilful means from psychology, neurology, and contemplative practice for personal well-being, relationships, work and spiritual development". <http://www.wisebrain.org/>

### ⇒ **A decision support tool / motivational interviewing tool and instructional video for clinicians**

Ottawa Personal Decision Guide (OPDG) during a simulated decision coaching session between an academic advisor and a student making an social decision. This same process can be used to guide someone making any

health or social decisions

[http://decisionaid.ohri.ca/opdg\\_video.html](http://decisionaid.ohri.ca/opdg_video.html)

### ⇒ **CHRONIC PAIN IN SCI Project on chronic pain in SCI**

Associate Professor Michelle Byrnes, in collaboration with Prof Stephan Schug at the Sir George Bedbrook Spinal Unit, Shenton Park, has recently conducted a project focused on the problem of chronic pain and multidisciplinary approaches to facilitate coping with pain following spinal cord injury. The second project assessed the efficacy of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) following neuro-trauma. A/Prof Byrnes is now leading a randomised controlled effectiveness trial of a group program of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) for patients with spinal cord injury and stroke who are experiencing chronic pain in collaboration with co-investigators in Australia.

### **Websites of interest for chronic pain**

\* **ACI Pain Management Network** at <http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/chronic-pain>

\* **Breathworks - Australia** at <http://breathworks-mindfulness.com.au/>

## Dates for your diary

### **July 2014**

Road to Recovery Course.  
Royal North Shore Hospital, 30th June –4th July  
For further information contact Aimee Marsh  
[AMarsh@nscchahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:AMarsh@nscchahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

### **November 2014**

19-21 November 2014  
ANZSCoS ASM Conference, Auckland, New Zealand.  
<http://www.anzscos2014.com/>