

Case Study – Paolo, Inpatient Rehabilitation Setting

Paolo is a 21 year old male who had an accident on his dirt bike and sustained a T5 incomplete Spinal Cord Injury. He needs his first wheelchair as part of his spinal inpatient rehabilitation discharge planning.

Prior to his accident Paolo lived at home with his parents and worked as a builder's labourer. His parents were both born in Italy but he and his siblings were all born in Australia. Paolo's extended family of 4 siblings, 2 nieces and 3 nephews also live in the same area and often get together.

Paolo is planning to return to living with his parents following discharge. (His mother visits the hospital daily, often bringing meals.) Paolo state he has never been much good at school and he is not sure what he will be able to do in the future.

Paolo is independent with transfers from wheelchair to bed, commode and car. He is independent in his personal ADL and is able to prepare a basic meal although he comments he has never really done much cooking. He independently performs intermittent catheterisations and has a second daily bowel regime which he is managing independently. Paolo has not commenced driving rehabilitation training yet but he wants to pursue this following discharge. He is currently able to use a taxi and wheelchair accessible bus.

Prior to his accident, Paolo enjoyed riding his dirt bike and generally "tinkering" with motorbikes in his spare time. He used to also go to the pub with his mates. He reports he never had much to do with computers but since he has been in hospital, he has learnt a bit about surfing the net.

Paolo's home is on a large block with a long, moderately sloped, concrete driveway. The house is double storey and Paolo will initially live on the ground floor. However, plans are being made to have an elevator installed. The ground floor is accessed through the garage. It has a large living/rumpus room, bedroom and bathroom with toilet. All rooms are tiled except the bedroom which has low pile carpet.

Paolo has no current postural issues but has experienced some pain in his wrists and forearms during his admission.