



PSV News

POLIO SERVICES VICTORIA

A Department of Human Services Program

St. Vincents Hospital Melbourne, 41 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy 3065

(3) 9288 3900 / 1800 030 324

Email: psv@svhm.org.au



P O L I O

S E R V I C E S

V I C T O R I A

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PSV Hotline Toll Free 1800 030 324

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PSV TEAM 2002

Louise King

Service Coordinator and Physiotherapist

Chris Graven, who was previously sharing the role of the service coordinator with Louise has moved interstate. Her hard work and dedication will be sadly missed by the service.

Dr Genevieve Kennedy

Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine

Darren Pereira

Orthdist/Prosthetist

Margaret Petkoff

Occupational Therapist

We would like to welcome Margaret to the service. She has 14 years of experience as an OT and has a Graduate Diploma in Neurosciences. She has particular interest in assisting people with vocational issues.

Jenny Wilson has left PSV to join the Rehabilitation in the Home Program. We wish her all the best in her new job.

PATIENT REPRESENTATIVE

Polio Services Victoria has access to the patient representative at St Vincent's Hospital.

This service provides a channel for dealing with complaints or concerns relating to care received. It is a valuable resource not only for clients, but for the staff at PSV as it allows a proactive approach to addressing the concerns expressed by clients before they become formalized complaints.

For further information on the patient representative please call Polio Services Victoria, or speak directly to the patient representative, Barbara Donnelly, on (03) 9288 3108, Mon to Fri 8am-5pm.

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PSV CLINICS 2002

Metropolitan Clinics

Clinics are held most Tuesday afternoons at St Vincent's Hospital. We recommend that everyone is reviewed in clinic every twelve months. If you haven't been seen in the last year, and you have some issues that need addressing, call us for an appointment.

Regional Clinics

This year there are six regional clinics scheduled. We visited Bairnsdale in February and had the senior physiotherapist from the hospital attend the clinic to familiarize himself with the needs of the local polio clientele.

Later in the year we plan to go to Bendigo (May), Horsham (June), Shepparton (August), Swan Hill (October) and Koroit (December).

Anyone who is interested in attending either a metropolitan or a regional clinic should let the staff at PSV know the earliest opportunity so that your needs can be met on the day.

FATIGUE RESEARCH

Last year some research into fatigue was conducted in a collaboration between La Trobe University, School of Occupational Therapy and Polio Services Victoria. The research aimed to investigate how fatigue is experienced by people with a history of polio, and how it impacts on their life. To do this an assessment tool was needed to accurately measure the amount and type of fatigue that people were reporting. To date there was no

such assessment that had validated this for the polio population.

A questionnaire called the Fatigue Impact Scale (FIS) had been shown to be effective in assessing fatigue in people with Multiple Sclerosis. Part of our research project was to determine if this questionnaire could be used for assessing people with a history of polio.

From the results of our study it has been demonstrated that the FIS is a valid and appropriate assessment tool for people with a history of polio and represents the first stages of presenting the FIS as a standardized tool to assess the impact of fatigue on these people.

In addition to this, the results highlight the impact that fatigue has on the physical, cognitive and psychosocial function of people with polio. Common causes of fatigue have been reported as occurring due to increased physical activity, difficulty sleeping, stress, associated medical conditions, weather, depression and medications.

This fatigue then results in a loss of function, impacting on an individual's ability to keep up with housework, gardening, walking, maintaining paid employment, cooking, socializing, reading and concentrating.

These results in turn have implications for the types of interventions and strategies that may be employed to help combat fatigue. Now that there is some understanding of fatigue and the impact it has on function, areas of intervention need to be developed to assist people to manage their fatigue and maintain their functional independence.

Polio Services Victoria would like to thank Krissy Bland who undertook this study. She put in a lot of time and effort and achieved really useful results. Polio Services is keen to continue this working relationship with La Trobe University and hopes to be able to take this project further and do more research into this important area in the near future.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

A number of queries have been raised recently regarding how to access public transport if you have limited mobility.

For general information in regards to travel on public transport in and around Melbourne there are a number of really useful websites. An example of this is www.movingmelbourne.com. This is a website dedicated to trams and trains with information on ticketing, fares and timetables.

For more specific information in regards to transport access for the disabled, the Department of Infrastructure has a website at www.dbi.vic.gov.au. Under the heading of transport and managing public transport you will find information on disability access in the "easygoing" folder. This outlines how to make travel easier if you have vision impairment, hearing loss, communication difficulties or you are in a wheelchair.

The Met Helpline 1800 652 313 may be able to offer more detailed advice in relation to specific transport needs.

Tram travel in Melbourne has always been difficult for those who have limited mobility, and impossible for those in a wheelchair. Yarra Trams are beginning to trial a new class of tram, the Citadis 300 TGA 202 built by ALSTROM, on the 96 and 109 tram routes. These trams are specially designed to have lower floors to make access easier for people with limited mobility. They have single step entry of 33cm from the ground, and wheelchair access from the middle entrance at superstops, light rail stops and various other selected stops.

Superstops are a new concept in tram stops, built on a ramp accessible platform that makes boarding and disembarking from trams easier. Currently there is a superstop at the corner of Collins St and Swanton Streets in the city, and there are plans underway to build more superstops at the corner of Collins St and Spring St, Beacon Cove and Station Pier, the Victoria Parade Interchange, Clarendon St Casino and the Box Hill Terminus.

Several reports from PSV clients have indicated that these trams are certainly easier to access than the more traditional trams, but I have yet to have any feedback from someone who has used one of these

trams from a wheelchair. For more information on this new tram have a look at www.yarratrams.com.au or call 1800 800 166.

Finding your way around the city can be difficult at the best of times. A useful map of the central business district is available for people with limited mobility. This map outlines parking for people with disabilities, accessible transport and accessible toilets. In addition to this it gives the gradients of the streets and footpaths to assist people in planning where it may be safe to take their wheelchair. There are also business hours and out of hours accessible routes. This map can be obtained by calling (03) 9658 9658 or it can be printed directly from their website www.accessmelbourne.vic.gov.au

MOVING HOUSE

Often people consider moving home when they become older or when they lose a loved one. For some people this may mean moving to a smaller home, moving to a retirement village, supported accommodation, or making other arrangements with family or friends.

People with polio often have special needs due to impaired mobility and/or upper limb weakness. There may also be issues related to fatigue and pain. When looking at new accommodation, most people consider economic, social and aesthetic factors.

- Can I afford this new home?
- Is it close to shops, family and friends and essential services?
- Is the property in good repair and does it look appealing?

Sometimes it can be easy to overlook environmental considerations. This means looking at whether the new property (including the dwelling and surrounding land) meets their current and future physical needs. People should consider the following environmental issues:

Access

- Can they get in and out of the dwelling safely and independently?
- If their mobility deteriorated in the future, could they still get in and out of the dwelling safely and independently or would modifications be required?

- Does the terrain allow the installation of an appropriate ramp at the recommended gradient, if required?

Bathroom

- Could they get in and out of the shower safely and independently without modification to the existing shower?
- Is there currently enough circulation space in the bathroom to allow someone to manoeuvre a gait aid?
- Could a stepless shower be installed if their mobility deteriorated?

Toilet

- Is the toilet currently easy to access?
- Would they be able to access the toilet with a gait aid?
- If their mobility deteriorated, would modifications be straightforward or require structural changes?

General Considerations

- Are hallways and doorways wide enough to accommodate gait aids and wheelchairs?
- Is there enough circulation space throughout the home with furniture in situ to accommodate gait aids or wheelchairs?
- How far are the bedroom and daily living areas from the toilet?
- Are outside pathways in good repair? If not, would they be expensive to repair?
- Is the property on flat land or on a sloping block? If the property is on a sloping block, could they walk independently outside at the present time? Would they still be able to access the front and back yard if their condition deteriorated?

The Occupational Therapist at Polio Services Victoria is trained to assess these issues. She is very happy to visit proposed new homes with clients before they purchase them to give advice on how the property would meet their present and future needs, and any home modifications that may be required.