

# Brachial Plexus Injury Newsletter

## In this edition...

Welcome to the Winter 2014 edition of Brachial Plexus News. There's lots of interest in this edition.

We have...

- **Airbag jacket for motorcyclists**
- **TBPI Charity AGM July 2014**
- **Introduction to New Team Physio**
- **Study Day for Professionals**
- **Telehealth**

## Airbag jacket for motorcyclists

This was demonstrated at the TBPI meeting. It is a jacket or vest designed for optimal safety if a motorcyclist is involved in an accident. The air chambers protect different parts of the body including neck, back, chest & hips. It is a mechanical airbag system (similar to those in cars) powered to inflate from a CO2 cartridge. It is lightweight and allows movement for the wearer and can be reused even after inflation by changing and renewing the CO2 cartridge. Once the jacket is being worn there is a clipping strap which connects from jacket to a fixed point on the bike and it is the force of this being pulled away during an accident that causes inflation to occur. There are 4 stockists at present in Scotland: Fife, Perth, Midlothian & Aberdeen. Further information is found on the manufacturer's website: [www.helite-motorcycle-airbagjackets.co.uk](http://www.helite-motorcycle-airbagjackets.co.uk)

I can vouch for the firm support & control that this gives around the chest, back & neck after inflation as I was a willing (?) volunteer for a demonstration of it at the TBPI weekend! ([www.tbpi-group.org](http://www.tbpi-group.org))

*BW*

## TBPI Charity AGM July 2014

Once again Beverley was invited to present a talk to the annual meeting of those associated with the group. The charity ([www.tbpi-group.org](http://www.tbpi-group.org)) was set up a few years ago with the intention to provide help and support to adults with a brachial plexus injury. This site is maintained and generated by injured people & their families and they encourage contact with others via the site.

Beverley was asked to speak on the wide subject encompassing anxiety, panic disorders, depression and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This meeting also provided those present an opportunity for a questions and answers session with her both in a group and also on a 1:1 basis.

*BW*

## Introduction to the New Team Physio – Andrea Shaarani

I graduated from Glasgow Caledonian University in 2002 and started my first rotational post at the Victoria Infirmary soon after. I gained a broad experience in different specialties within the hospital environment and identified that musculoskeletal physiotherapy was my area of interest. I began to pursue this speciality in 2006 when I took up a senior post in NHS Lanarkshire for 2 years. This involved working alongside experienced therapists and attending post graduate courses which proved invaluable in developing my knowledge and experience in this field. At this point I was aware of my interest in the upper limb and was lucky enough to start a specialist post in musculoskeletal rehabilitation and hand therapy at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in 2008. I have been there since, specialising in hand and upper limb injuries, attending courses including acupuncture, orthopaedic medicine and

injection therapy. Having this clinical experience enabled me to be successful in gaining this post and taking the fantastic opportunity to be part of the Scottish National Brachial Plexus Injury Service.

I am looking forward to taking the service forward and developing the physiotherapy role within this team. I aim to maintain and improve the network of links across the country with the therapists treating our patients. I will also continue treatment of peripheral nerve injuries and entrapments and management of the paralysed limb.

I am still working through an induction programme and developing my knowledge in this specific patient group. However I am at the New Victoria Hospital Mon and Fri for any consultations or general enquiries.

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## Study Day for Professionals

The Scottish National Brachial Plexus Injury Service hosted its biennial study day in October 2014. This is open to all healthcare professional from across Scotland (and beyond!). There were 29 attendees consisting of a mix of staff from medical, nursing, physiotherapy & occupational therapy. They came from Belfast, Newcastle, Aberdeen, Dundee, Fife, Lanarkshire, Glasgow, Forth Valley, Dumfries and Clackmannan.

The speakers presenting were all members of the team including Mr Hems, Prof Hart, Beverley (Clinical Nurse Specialist), Claire (OT), Andrea (our new physio) and Christine (Orthotist).

The team received excellent evaluation feedback at the end of the day. The aim of these events is to share our knowledge and skills with other professionals in other clinical settings who may be providing care for individuals with a brachial plexus injury.

Thanks go to our 2 patients who travelled to participate in the day and agreed for their cases to be presented to the audience. They both allowed themselves to be examined in front of the attendees and then questioned by the audience too. We extend our most grateful thanks to John and Daniel.

BW





## Telehealth

As part of a Quality Improvement Project completed recently, Claire looked at the potential to use Telehealth calls within The Scottish National Brachial Plexus Injury Service. The aim of the project was to pilot Telehealth interventions with patients and to obtain their feedback to identify if it is a useful communication method to proceed with.

For the purpose of the project telehealth is defined as the use of electronic communication with patients – similar to Skype & Face Time calls, but has the added benefit of security. The system used to complete the project is Cisco Jabber.

For someone to make a telehealth call the following requires to be in place;

- **Cisco Jabber user name & login – this is free to access & if you wish to proceed with a call you would be provided with the required information. Not all PC / laptops / tablets are compatible with this software**
- **A telephone call is required to arrange a suitable time**
- **Call requires to be initiated by Occupational Therapist to ensure a secure network**

From the outset it was hoped that the introduction of telehealth to the Scottish National Brachial Plexus Service would allow patients to communicate with the Occupational Therapist in a new medium. It was hoped that this means of communication would allow patients to demonstrate difficulties they are experiencing with hand function or activities of daily living to the Occupational Therapist who can then identify appropriate techniques or equipment in a timely manner rather than waiting for face to face intervention at clinic.

As part of the project, calls were completed with a number of patients. It was established that ethical consent was not required for this project. The sample group was taken from patients with ongoing intervention from the Occupational Therapist. These patients were contacted & asked to participate in the project. The purpose of the project was explained to the patients at this point.

Details were provided regarding how to download the required Cisco Jabber software & calls were completed at a time that was convenient to both the patients & the Occupational Therapist. Calls were completed in privacy & patients were advised that interventions were confidential & would be documented as per a telephone call in Occupational Therapy documentation.

Following completion of calls feedback was obtained from patients.

Overall feedback was positive and patients felt that this offered them the opportunity to demonstrate potential difficulties with Occupational Therapy staff and also to allow the Occupational Therapist to demonstrate equipment that may assist with the difficulties reported.

The service has recently obtained a laptop to assist with developing this project & we are awaiting the appropriate software to be installed. It is then hoped that patients will be able to access this new method of communication by telehealth calls. We will provide patients with the necessary details & contacts to then complete calls as appropriate. To discuss this service progress and how you may benefit from it please contact Claire.

**CMcG**

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