

14th February 2018

Clinical Practice Workshops Announced – Demystifying the Late Effects of Polio and Post-Polio Syndrome

It's often thought of as a disease of the past, but more than 400,000 Australians who have ever had polio could be experiencing the Late Effects of Polio (LEoP) or Post-Polio Syndrome (PPS). Do you know how to recognise LEoP/PPS in your practice?

Decades after the last poliomyelitis epidemics in Australia, the aftermath of the disease is now becoming evident in our ageing 'polio population' who may present with increasing muscle weakness, increasing or new pain or multifactorial fatigue and decline. There is also a younger population who have migrated to Australia who require management and support.

There are many cross-overs in the treatment and management of other chronic diseases and LEoP/PPS, and there are also some very significant differences. If LEoP is not identified, the client can experience rapidly worsening symptoms due to inadvertently incorrect care.

During May, two Clinical Practice Workshops will be held in Adelaide by Polio Australia, to demystify Late Effects of Polio and Post-Polio Syndrome and present practical strategies to manage the symptoms.

For many LEoP/PPS clients, biomedical and pharmaceutical treatments have limited efficacy, and Polio survivors are turning to allied health practitioners to help them improve their quality of life. General Practitioners, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, orthotists, exercise physiologists, nurses, podiatrists, speech pathologists, dietitians, social workers, case managers, and anyone interested in knowing more about the post-polio body are encouraged to attend.

Workshop Date	Workshop Time	Venue Address
7/05/2018	14:00 - 17:00	Flinders Medical Centre, Flinders Drive, Bedford Park
11/05/2018	13:00 - 16:00	The Queen Elizabeth Hospital - Clinical Education Unit, 28 Woodville Rd, Woodville South

For further information, visit <http://www.poliosa.org.au/health-professionals/>

ENDS

For further information, hi-res photos & interviews please contact:

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ABOUT POLIO SA:

Polio SA is a not for profit organisation operated by volunteers. All staff and members have had polio or have a family relative diagnosed with post-polio syndrome (PPS). PPS is the late effect of polio, usually occurring 20 to 40 years after the initial infection. Not all people who previously had polio will experience new symptoms.

Our aim is to:

- provide information about the late effects of polio and PPS to members and the greater community
- provide a supportive network through consultations, referrals and social gatherings, and
- ensure that Polio SA members are aware of their rights regarding their disability.

We provide the following services:

- mutual support through group meetings
- access to discounted health services including massage and hydrotherapy (see our website for details of current services)
- newsletters keeping members up to date with local and international developments
- access to a wide range of relevant information, and
- connecting people with similar interests.

Country groups Previously there were polio support groups in rural South Australia, however to our knowledge these are no longer active. All Polio SA resources are available to our rural members, including books, fact sheets, past newsletters, and personal stories.

“Have you ever had Polio?” The key question to ask patients

An estimated 400,000 people may be experiencing the Late Effects of Polio (LEoP) or Post-Polio Syndrome (PPS). A younger population who have migrated to Australia also require management and support.

For older patients presenting in clinics with increasing muscle weakness, increasing or new pain or multifactorial fatigue and decline, Polio SA president Brett Howard advises health professionals to ask, ‘Have you ever had polio?’.

“It is common that those who had Polio when they were younger, like myself, have fought hard to overcome Polio and simply aren’t aware of the late effects of the disease. When weakness and pain return, it can be hard to face”, says Howard.

The Late effects of Polio tend to be more noticeable as people begin to age, says Dr Nigel Quadros, Senior Consultant, Rehabilitation Medicine at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital and a specialist in PPS.

“Having polio in the past may contribute significantly to multifactorial decline and fatigue that often presents among ageing patient populations. People who contracted Polio in Australia are now in their 60s at the youngest – and will hopefully enjoy a long life thanks to modern medicine.

So they are going to have more problems related to the effects of Polio.”

Where PPS is suspected, a proper medical evaluation to identify and treat reversible causes of fatigue and weakness, such as diabetes, or thyroid disease is advised.

There are minimal studies showing any benefit of medications to treat fatigue and weakness in post-polio patients. The main advice is lifestyle modification – healthy diet, losing weight, and energy

conservation. Adapting clinical practices to the suit post-polio body is essential to prolong daily functional ability.

“Knowing your limits and having frequent breaks is really important for polio survivors because they were real go-getters – they had to prove as youngsters that they could keep up,” says Dr Quadros.

“It’s important for those around them to understand their limitations and provide them with support and understanding.”

Keep up to date with the latest resources on Late Effects of Polio (LEoP) and Post-Polio Syndrome (PPS) and upcoming Clinical Practice Workshops by subscribing to Polio SA’s Health Professionals newsletter at <http://www.poliosa.org.au/health-professionals/>