



MT WILGA PRIVATE REHABILITATION HOSPITAL

Living Your Best Life after Polio

WWW.MTWILGAPRIVATE.COM.AU

Mt Wilga Private Rehabilitation Hospital is located in Hornsby in Sydney's upper northern suburbs. For over 60 years, we have been supporting people who have lifelong neurological conditions to live their lives as independently as possible. Mt Wilga's reputation in rehabilitation excellence is based on our "people caring for people" philosophy, providing patient focussed high quality evidenced based care in Neurological, Orthopaedic, Lymphoedema, Cardiac and Oncology Rehabilitation.

In 2015 Mt Wilga joined with Polio NSW and developed an Assessment Clinic for individuals with LEOp, under the medical guidance of Dr Helen Mackie, Rehabilitation Physician. Our physiotherapy and occupational therapy assessments provide tailored exercise prescription and recommendations for assistive technology aids and equipment and referral for community supports.

In September 2016, we were asked to be the filming location for a series of videos which will be used to promote not only Polio Awareness Month, the Australian Polio Register but promotion of LEOp Clinic workshops to highlight the benefits to people with LEOp to improve their function.

We are proud to have Dr Helen Mackie and Catriona Morehouse, Physiotherapist speaking at this year's conference and also to be exhibiting. We wish everyone a very successful 2016 Conference.



Mary-ann Liethof (far left), National Program Manager of Polio Australia presenting plaque to Mt Wilga staff including, CEO Lorrie Mohsen (far right) for our support of the Post Polio Community.



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A Patient approach

Dr Helen Mackie, Rehabilitation Consultant



Prompted and requested by my patients with polio to do more for them and their peers I asked Mt Wilga Rehabilitation Hospital to “take on” the development of a LEOp Clinic in 2015.

Having the support of Polio NSW and particularly Merle Thompson was vital. The principal goal of the Mt Wilga LEOp Clinic was to provide a comprehensive multidisciplinary assessment to the person with polio, to allow them to plan for their future.

The experience for all of the clinicians involved has been rewarding and often humbling. Many people had contracted polio before attending school, some before starting to walk but all had attended public schools, sometimes experiencing bullying and harassment but often complete acceptance. Most people finished high school and then onto tertiary education. All went on to achieve in professions or trades until retirement.

While for the most part the medical needs of those attending the LEOp Clinic have been met, the LEOp Clinic has identified unmet or poorly met physical and functional needs which

could be addressed to achieve the goals and aspirations of those attending our Clinic.

We will have seen over 70 people with Polio by the end of 2016. I hope that the assessments undertaken by the Mt Wilga LEOp Clinic have provided positive and useful information and recommendations for future enjoyment of life.

Can I exercise after Polio?

Catriona Morehouse, Neurological Clinical Lead

Exercise following poliomyelitis is a contentious issue and has been long debated since the 1980s. Depending on which article you are reading, health professionals have argued for and against exercise for people with the late effects of polio or post-polio syndrome. Advances in neuromuscular assessment technology have improved research quality when assessing the effect of exercise on polio affected muscles. The most important consideration when commencing any exercise in polio survivors is, “has this program been individualised for me?”

Exercise needs to avoid exhausting and overworking muscles which are already loaded enough when carrying out daily activities. A combination of strengthening and cardiovascular exercise is advised, however more recovery time and rest days are extremely important. As well as formal exercise – such as prescribed by a physiotherapist – day to day life is also incidental physical activity and should be planned around. Exercise can be in a variety of modalities such as on a treadmill, arm cycle, with weights or in water. To get the best out of your exercise, a few supervised sessions with a

physiotherapist who has considered the late effects of polio is recommended. This way, you report any unwanted symptoms which help to guide what exercise will be best – such as muscle fatigue, spasm or pain. Exercise should never be fatiguing or exhaustive, if you feel wiped out the following day, this is a sign you have done too much.



Catriona conducting a 10 metre walk test with a patient at Mt Wilga

Hip and knee pain related to Post Polio

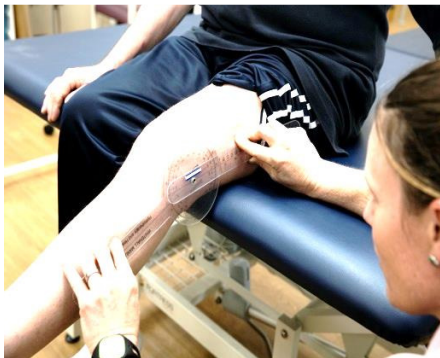
Graham Walker, Orthopaedic Physiotherapy Team Leader, Day Program

For many people with Post Polio, they may develop debilitating biomechanical and neurological problems much later in life. This is called the Late Effects of Polio (LEoP). Symptoms may include fatigue, progressive muscle weakness and pain in other joints and limbs.

Typically, a skilled neurological physiotherapist is the most appropriate therapist to treat patients with polio related difficulties; however there are a growing number of people with more orthopaedic and musculo-skeletal needs. It is important to remember that people with polio also have other co-morbidities such as arthritis and soft tissue disorders.

LEoP symptoms such as muscle weakness often cause altered biomechanics of the lower limbs. This consequently leads to abnormal gait and uneven wear and tear of the hips and knees and predictable pain. This is where the skills of a musculoskeletal physiotherapist are most helpful. Gentle progressive strengthening of muscles groups, appropriate joint stretches and mobilisations, taping and soft tissue techniques can all play a part in easing the LEoP symptoms.

Unfortunately, as the Australian population ages, the effects of ageing on a polio body can accelerate frailty and functional decline. If orthopaedic surgery is required, the rehabilitation of a polio patient following a total hip or knee replacement needs to be considered. As a result, I expect that there will be more polio patients in the coming years that will benefit from the skilled treatment of a well-informed musculoskeletal physiotherapist.



Orthopaedic Physio on arthritic knee

mtwilgaprivate.com.au
66 Rosamond Street
Hornsby NSW 2077

Assistive Technology keeping Polio survivors independent

Michelle Browett, Occupational Therapist

Assistive Technology is often used by Polio survivors to increase and/or maintain independence and quality of life. Assistive Technology includes any aid or device that people use to adapt a task to increase their safety and/or independence. This can include mobility aids, wheelchairs, aids for daily living such as equipment for showering or dressing, car modifications such as installation of hand controls and home modifications such as ramps or grab rails. Assistive Technology can be useful in helping to prevent falls, managing fatigue and conserving energy, as well as enabling people to access their environment and perform daily tasks despite physical limitations including weakness, pain or fatigue.

Assistive Technology should be specifically matched to the Polio survivor to ensure that it meets their needs. Thorough assessment of the individual's physical abilities and limitations is important, along with consideration of their future needs.

If Assistive Technology is not set up appropriately for the individual it may encourage poor posture, abnormal movement patterns or excessive use of certain muscle groups.

This could lead to increased pain and fatigue and possibly cause safety risks. It is best to seek advice from an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist with training and experience in the Late Effects of Polio.

When selecting Assistive Technology, there are many things that should be considered including the various environments where the equipment will be used and how the equipment will be transported. If possible, trial of the equipment within the relevant setting is beneficial and training may need to be provided to ensure safe and correct use of the equipment. Becoming reliant on adaptive devices can be very daunting for many so it is important that they are given support, information and choice when selecting equipment.

Polio survivors can explore the range of aids and devices available to them through Australia's Independent Living Centres at ilcaustralia.org.au



Michelle Browett (far left) with Polio Survivors, Helen Mackie (2nd from right) and Catriona Morehouse (far right)

Dates for Upcoming Clinics

Friday 14th October

Friday 11th November

Friday 9th December

Please call (02) 9847 5085