

IFSHT teaching grant: Nepal 21st -25th May, 2018

Recipient report: Jenny Ball

On the 19th of May, 2018, a team of 3 Physiotherapists from Australia travelled to Kathmandu in Nepal for a week of formal teaching, practical workshops and in-hospital mentoring, as part of a volunteer program for Interplast Australia, with additional funding from the IFSHT teaching grant. Three eminent Australian Professors of Hand and Burn surgery were also there to teach surgeons gathered from across Asia, skills in reconstructive surgery. The team, led by Jenny Ball, along with Prof Gillian Webb and Maddie Bayly-Stark were on their 2nd annual visit to this country where Hand and Burn Therapy is becoming an emerging and necessary specialty for Physiotherapists who make up the majority of the acute and rehabilitation workforce.

The team had the privilege and opportunity to provide a 3-day course of curriculum for the Kathmandu University School of Physiotherapy on the management of Hand trauma and Burns therapy. It was attended by 30 Physiotherapy students, 2 Physios from Bhutan, one Physio from Bangladesh, 2 Physios from the Nepal Society for Hand Rehabilitation and Research and lecturers from the University. Following the course further training and mentoring in Hands and Burns took place at the Kirtipur Burns and Cleft Palate Hospital for 2 days.

The learning outcomes achieved over the course of the week included the development of clinical reasoning skills in the management of acute and late trauma from hand injuries and whole of body burns using a wound healing approach. Assessment, treatment, outcome measurement and discharge planning were explored using current evidence, wound healing principles, practice knowledge, physiotherapy skills, and cognisance of the human and consumable resources available in their countries



(Physiotherapist Uygen Namgyel, presented with IFSHT donated Dynamometer to take back to Bhutan)

Tensile limits and scar potential of tissues at varying stages post trauma and post op were considered and practical skills obtained in control of oedema, stiffness, tendon protection and mobilisation, early mobilisation, respiratory care and contracture prevention and scar management in burns.

Practical workshops enabled the students to develop handing skills with materials ranging from Plaster of Paris, to fibreglass and thermoplastics, ensuring that the materials which are often donated to them can be used effectively and confidently. Skills in splint and compression garment pattern drafting and making were achieved also. Funding by the IFSHT for workshop materials and goniometers is gratefully acknowledged.



Comprehension and application of the knowledge and skills imparted in the course were assessed in a formal test (which everyone passed!) and also in a session where groups worked together on all the elements of provided case studies, presenting their entire treatment (assessment, planning, clinical reasoning, practical techniques and splints or garments) back to the whole class for discussion.

This course provided an opportunity for Nepalese Physiotherapists, students and Physiotherapists from neighbouring countries to come together, enjoy each other's company, share ideas and experiences and explore the concept that the Physiotherapy knowledge and skills that they already have can be applied to patients with hand and burn injuries.



(Physios from Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh).

(Learning to make their own collars and pressure garments)

The need for burn contracture prevention, scar management and optimisation of hand function is paramount in countries where access to expedient and effective treatment is made difficult by geography and limited professional and material resources. Our biggest gift to them is not just the materials we donate but the facilitation of a physiological and clinical reasoning approach to treating patients. They have these skills already, and now the confidence to use them.

Jenny Ball, MAPA, AHT (Australia), CHT (USA)