

## **Empowering Positive Spinal Muscular Care For Our Seniors**

We live in an age where the experiences and the potential of our seniors are about lost as we fail to cherish their views, their contributions and what they are capable of doing.

In our quest for external youth and with the impulsiveness of a younger generation, we surround our seniors with statements like "There is NOTHING that can be done for you", that "You are Old" and that pharmacological intervention can resolve "everything".

How many health professional purport these negative messages each day to our seniors? It is no wonder many give up the willingness to live and to strive something better for themselves.

At the recent Living Longer Living Stronger conference held at the Alexander Library in October 2005, direct and specific messages were directed towards seniors that they should take a more direct and empowered approach to their spinal muscular wellness.

This message was heeded by many in the audience and this case study is but one of many examples that we have that highlights how proactive and interactive care can make a difference to the potential and wellbeing of others.

Mary Ramplin is an active member of the Living Longer Living Stronger program where she partakes her regular exercise and fitness regime with the guidance of the fitness experts at the Active 8 Health & Fitness Centre in Perth City. Mary continues to work as a Registered Nurse at Royal Perth Hospital and was taken by the message that was imparted on that faithful day where she reported that she was uplifted from the message given and though at the time she was unsure what the spinal muscular treatment entailed, decided to make a proactive effort to seek care at the Perth Integrated Health Clinic.

Mary's reporting symptoms of neck and mid back pain was typical of the daily reporting that we seem to get from many of our seniors. They are grateful for the opportunity of exercise and the forum to do so, yet desire a more proactive, natural and ethical approach by the other health professionals that they were consulting for their recovery. The realisation of the difference between symptomatic care and recovery care is an uplifting bridge that many can and should cross.

Mary undertook the spinal muscular treatment with Ian Wee, Principal Occupational Therapist at the Perth Integrated Health Clinic, who coincidentally was the message giver at the Healthy Bones seminar mentioned above. After obtaining Mary's input on her clinical history and her desire for improvement, diagnostic tests were employed and after these were discussed, a plan was then suggested to Mary to undertake. This treatment plan which is the hallmark of focused practical care requires the joint commitment of both the client and practitioner as they have to work together as a mutual team to achieve success.

Without going into the specific clinical condition of Mary, she was asked weeks into the treatment program how she perceived functional changes to herself and her spinal muscular systems.

Mary describes the following changes: She is more aware of her posture and position in space, she experiences increased strength and is able to achieve far more in her tasks at work and at home, no longer struggles with headaches that has been plaguing her for years and importantly so – has improved coordination.

These functional improvements reported by Mary were substantiated by the post diagnostic tests and reviews undertaken by the practitioner.

When asked if this spinal muscular treatment which is non invasive and drug free has assisted her with her Living Longer Living Stronger program, Mary asserts in the positive citing that she no longer experiences any joint or muscle pain after exercise, is able to sustain her longer for the program and has no residual pain the day after exercises.

The message we are wishing to impart includes:

1. Never accept your age as an excuse for non proactive action of your practitioner. Our oldest patient currently in care is 92 years young;
2. Take charge of your care and be upfront with your practitioner about your specific requirements and make sure they listen to your needs;
3. Set treatment goals for yourself and ensure that your practitioner does the same for you and make them accountable for it;
4. Don't accept the easy way out by over medicating and ask every time not only the effects of the medication but the specific adverse effects of these drugs;
5. Do realise that there are other options of non invasive methods of spinal muscular care which is far less jarring and toxic for yourself.

The Perth Integrated Health Clinic is proud of its association with COTA's Living Longer Living Stronger program. In 2006, we wish to send our message of empowered spinal muscular care which is complimentary to the ethos of the LLLS program to each and every LLLS centre and would like to hear from the various coordinators and centre manager of the endorsed LLLS programs.

Those interested to know more about positive spinal muscular care and interested to hear about our message for your clients, please contact:

Ian Wee  
Director  
Perth Integrated Health Clinic  
41 Havelock Street, West Perth  
Tel: 08 9226 1239 Email: [ianwee@pihc.com.au](mailto:ianwee@pihc.com.au)