



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Burn Model System Newsletter

Fall 2007



What Does Rehabilitation Mean for Burn Survivors?

What is *Rehabilitation* and what does it mean to you and your family? The goal of Rehabilitation Care is simply to return the burn survivor to their pre-injury level of function with as little need for assistive devices as possible.

Who provides *Rehabilitation* for the burn survivor? We all do - the entire burn team to include doctors, nurses, nutritionist, psychologists, vocational rehabilitation counselor, child life specialist, and physical and

occupational therapists. Together, we develop an individualized plan of care that meets the specific needs of each patient and their family.

However, the most important member of that team is YOU - the burn survivor.

Burn Injury Information Group

The meeting location and time for our informational support group has changed - we now meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 1-2:00pm in the 8th floor Clinic

Conference Room, East Hospital at Harborview Medical Center. This group is open to all burn survivors and their families. Upcoming meeting dates include November 21

& December 19th. This meeting is sponsored by the Northwest Burn Foundation and it is available free of charge. Directions to the clinic may be found on our website.

Therapist Profile: Beth Costa, OTR.

Beth Costa, one of our Burn Rehabilitation Occupational Therapists, graduated from Texas Woman's University (Dallas, Texas) in 1990. Soon after graduation Beth traveled to Harborview Medical Center to work with burn-injured patients and their families. If treated here at HMC, you have likely met Beth and possibly wondered....

What is Occupational Therapy? According to the American Occupational Therapy Association - "Occupational therapy is skilled treatment that helps individuals achieve independence in all facets of their lives. Occupational therapy

assists people in developing the 'skills for the job of living' necessary for independent and satisfying lives."

If you ask Beth what she does everyday - she'll likely respond with a list of responsibilities to include: physical ability assessments, treatment plan development to include exercise, splinting, use of pressure garments and facial pressure masks. "I see patients at all timepoints in their recovery while an inpatient and in the clinic as an outpatient." Beth is also a key member of our research team and recently co-published an article with Dr. Matthew Klein.

Research Update

In the May/June 2007 issue of Burn Care & Research, we report on issues concerning heterotopic ossification (HO) - a known complication of burn injury that can limit movement and function of joints - particularly of the elbows.

Injury and recovery data from patients with and without HO were compared. In this retrospective review we found that the cause and "best" treatments for HO are still unclear. However, we did learn that patients with arm burns that had open elbow wounds for a longer period of time were more likely to develop HO. This finding is important and means that we will be looking for ways to provide skin coverage over elbow wounds as early as possible.

Dr. Klein, Associate Director of the Burn Center, worked closely with Beth Costa in this review and in the preparation of this manuscript.

This study was funded by NIDRR.

Did You Know?

UV rays from the sun can be very damaging to newly healed skin and grafts. Use sunblock and wear cover-up clothing everyday - even during the winter months!

Visit our website at

<https://depts.washington.edu/uwnidrr/> for more information.

To reach the UW/HMC Burn Center Clinic, call 206-744-5735.