



Otago Exercise Programme (OEP) Update for Practice Teams

OEP 5 years on ...

Harbour Primary Health Organisation, trading as Harbour Health, is now in its fifth year of delivering the Otago Exercise Programme in the North Harbour community (Northcote through to Warkworth).

Thank you to all those who support us by referring into this fall prevention and quality of life improvement programme for older adults.

The purpose of this newsletter is provide a forum to report back on current statistics and to share with you, experiences from those who have been through the OEP programme.

For those who are unsure of the eligibility criteria (referral is via the OEP referral form, copies attached):



OEP Eligibility Criteria:

Those 80 years and over* and living independently in the North Harbour Region (Northcote to Warkworth) and;

And

Has previously tripped or fallen

Or

Older people who are at risk of falling, especially:

- those who are housebound due to anxiety about falling
- "furniture grabbers" as they mobilise around their home
- Older people who have difficulty standing from a seated position
- Those who are unsteady on their feet.

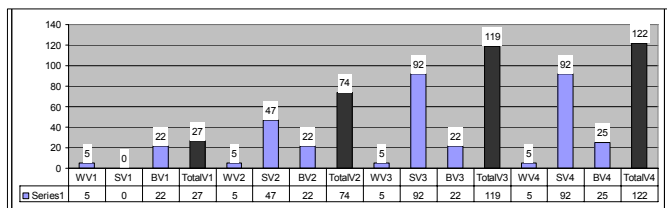
* If your patient does not meet the age criteria but should be considered for the programme, please complete the OEP referral form and supply sufficient supporting information to enable us to advocate with ACC for your patient to be enrolled.

The OEP Programme:

A home visiting OEP Physiotherapist is assigned to each OEP Participant for 12 months. The Physios' assess and tailor the exercises to the individual and provide support and motivation to ensure everyone gets the most from this programme.

Home Safety Checks are carried out on the first visit to identify any potential hazards within the home to create a safe environment. If required referrals to the Hospital based OT's and physios or NZ Fire Service for smoke alarm installations are instigated.

To keep the OEP participant motivated, they are shown their progress in graph form to emphasize their increase in strength and balance. They also receive bi monthly newsletters which share feedback from others, celebrate birthdays, list those who finish, and provide home and fire safety information.



The OEP Team

For enquiries, brochures, referral forms, patient updates, please contact:

Naseema Dutt OEP Administrator, Harbour Health
DDI: 09 448 0478
Email: ndutt@harbourhealth.org.nz

Or:

Lis Cowling OEP Programme Manager, Harbour Health
DDI: 09 448 0462
Email: lcowling@harbourhealth.org.nz

OEP Physio Teams:

North Shore

Debbie, Susan, Jenny, Margaret, Margot, Catherine

Rodney – Orewa Team:

Jeannetta, Anna

Rodney – Warkworth:

Bernadette

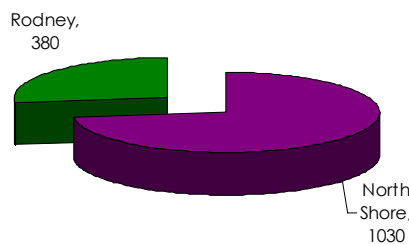
Current Statistics

As at 31 January 2008, our Statistics were:

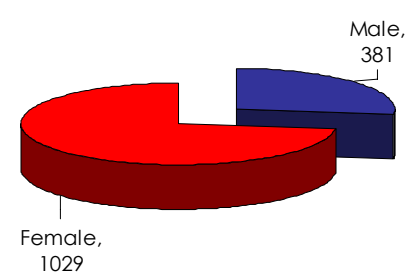
| 1410 | Total Enrolled |
|------------|-----------------|
| 435 | Current |
| 48 | On Hold |
| 282 | Finished |
| 645 | Off Programme |

- Oldest participant to complete OEP – Elizabeth from Milford – 101 years young
- 85 years old – Average age of those referred
- 127 Homes fitted with Smoke Alarms courtesy of the NZ Fire Service since 2005
- 44 Homes fitted with various handrails via NSH OT's
- 6 participants fitted for Walking Frames and/or sticks via NSH Community Physiotherapists

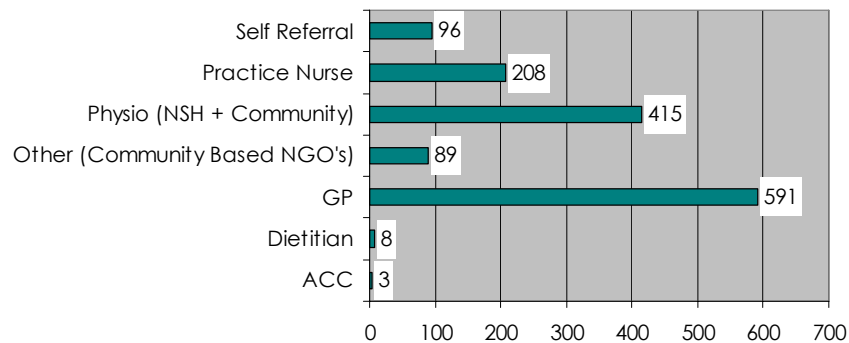
OEP Enrolled - By Region (n=1410)



OEP Enrolled - By Gender (n=1410)



OEP Enrolled - By Referrer (n=1410)





OEP Experiences

Both Stories featured in the North Shore Times in 2007:

Mrs Corry's Story:

Last February, walking down outside front steps, Mrs Corry caught her heel in a rubber mat at the bottom and lost her balance. Her daughter was present at the time and rushed to help. She was amazed when her Mum managed to stay upright. Mrs Corry said she knew if she hit the concrete she would break her hip.

"I did my very best not to fall and I didn't, in fact I went dancing, but managed to stay upright." Although Mrs Corry twisted her ankle she is quite positive that exercises from the programme kept her from a more serious injury. "I had the agility to keep on my feet," she said.

While on the 12-month OEP programme, Mrs Corry found that the more she did the exercises, the quicker and more agile she became. After completing the 12 months she continued to do her prescribed exercises weekly.

Mrs Corry's advice for those who are living independently who would like to regain their mobility is: "Don't just sit there and don't do anything. Definitely get out of those chairs."

"The exercises teach you how to do things sensibly. It's an excellent scheme and it's a pity a lot more people don't do it. My story is just one example that the falls- prevention programme can work."

Mrs Corry keeps in touch with the latest developments and feedback from other programme participants through OEP Update, a bi-monthly newsletter. It was after reading one of these newsletters that she rang Harbour Health to share her story.

The Anderson's

North Shore resident, 82-year-old Mrs Erin Anderson explains, "I lost my confidence after a fall". She was discussing a fall she suffered in October 2006 which resulted in a fractured wrist. After the fall, Mrs Anderson, along with her self-confessed 'couch potato' husband Roger, were referred by their practice nurse to the Otago Exercise programme (OEP).

Roger Anderson said: "When we first started on the OEP programme Catherine checked through the house to make sure it was safe, looking at things such as getting in and out of the shower without falling and fixing loose rugs so they were no longer a potential hazard. I really appreciated it."

At Mrs Anderson's recent final assessment, Catherine said she was delighted with the progress made. "The results of the past year were definitely evident. Erin and Roger are both more confident now. The reason OEP works is that when you exercise you feel better and build strength and confidence. As we age, it becomes even more important to continue to exercise. If you do less, you will become less able."



"Following her fall and before OEP, there was a risk that Erin might want to stay inside and to not venture out because she worried about tripping again. She was also worried there may be no-one there to help her," said Catherine.

After the exercise programme Erin felt her confidence return. "After doing the exercises, I found I didn't have to grab hold of Roger for reassurance anymore," Erin said.



Roger also commented on his new-found strength, "with the gardening, it now takes me less time to get up from the weeding."

Motivation is an important aspect of any exercise programme.

"Being encouraged by Catherine was very good motivation," said Erin. "Roger and I are motivated by each other too, but we don't do our exercises together, Roger talks too much!"

The couple now enjoy regular walks along Milford beach for at least 30 minutes at least twice a week. "Erin makes me go walking. I do enjoy being by the sea and I walk as far as I can before Erin has to carry me home!"

"By getting out and about more the Andersons can feel more connected with the community where they live," said Catherine. "Over the past year, Erin and Roger have both greatly improved their strength and balance and are doing more now than when I first met them a year ago."

"Consistency is the most important thing. Although you should feel relaxed about doing the OEP exercises, you do need to be determined and committed to do them. It won't work in a day or two, you need to persist with it. It is long term," said Roger

"I really enjoyed being on the programme. I found it a positive experience," said Erin. "I have read that lots of people found the OEP great and I really feel it was great."

Other Feedback:

"I'm very happy with my programme, only old age keeps me from going Bungee Jumping." SM, 82yrs

"I was greatly taken with the exercises and enjoyed doing them and I will keep it up. I think the exercises were adequate for me. Many thanks to my "instructor". LH, 88yrs

"At first sighting the exercises appeared elementary childish. However seeking to impress my tutor, I soon discovered my mistake. No suggestions for improvements." LT, 86 yrs.

"I would like to thank you and your team for making my life more enjoyable". RB, 86yrs

"The instructor Catherine was a great help and motivator. The programme suited me very well. Thank you for taking an interest in my well being." NM, 91yrs

"I think the programme is very good and I am heaps better. I don't need walking stick or walker around the house. When I go out shopping, all I need is a walking stick." JH, 83 yrs.

"I am very happy with the programme. It has helped me no end. I feel much more confident now and aim to continue with the exercises and walking. Many thanks to you all." BS, 83yrs

"A great scheme I have recommended it to others." JB, 85yrs