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Axel Scholz
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Department Human Services

Axel – thank you for your inquiry regarding clinical services provided at HyperMED Australia.

When you are in Melbourne please do not hesitate to visit!

I have attached several newsletters available on our site – HyperMED Newsletters. In addition the HyperMED Media File provides a number of direct patient experiences with a range of disorders.

The majority of patients making inquiry and attending HyperMED suffer complex neurodegenerative disorders ranging from spinal cord injury, motor neuron disorders, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, failed back surgery, near drowning, stroke, cancer etc.

In fact in excess of 70% of patients attend from interstate and overseas. All patients consult as ‘private pays’ - there is NO Medicare or Third Party Insurance coverage.

You may rightly ask the question why do patients attend from interstate and or overseas!

What makes us different is the fact that we are the only facility in Australia using the merits of Hyperbaric Oxygenation (HBOT) in the treatment and management of chronic and progressive neurological disorders. Further we are the ONLY facility world wide using HBOT combined with Lokomat (Robotic Gait Assisted Walking) and other assertive therapies.

Clinical information regarding Hyperbaric Oxygenation and Lokomat are available on our site at www.hypermed.com.au but also internet based medical publishing search engines including www.PubMed.com will come up with considerable links including current studies at www.clinicaltrials.gov.

Australia first Lokomat was installed at 15 Collins St Melbourne in December 2006. Currently HyperMED Australia has the only Lokomat in Australia. We envisage approximately 15-20 Lokomats to be located in NeuroRecovery facilities across Australia within the next 2-3 years. The difficulty is not the demand but the relatively high cost to establish each facility. Chambers cost in excess of \$200,000 each; Lokomat (adult and paediatric) in excess of \$700,000!

There are approximately 120-Lokomats world wide with approximately 55-Lokomats in the USA. England has recently installed their first Lokomat.

Most hospitals have major funding grants including government and private funding. I spent several years ‘knocking’ on corporate doors seeking funding assistance to raise the necessary funds to purchase Australia first Lokomat. However this proved to be a difficult path, ultimately my wife and I have funded this entire program!

Lokomats are located in the larger Neurorehabilitation hospitals across the world. In the USA hospitals providing Lokomat are supported with FDA status and Third Party medical insurance. In the USA Lokomat based Neurorehabilitation programs are intensive and run for several months at a time.

Most patients are required to ‘live-in’ and the programs are often termed the ‘boot camp’ of the rehabilitation world! This is not possible at this stage within Australia. The high cost of running the facility

is partly reflected by the costs each individual patient has to burden. We are literally inundated with patient requests for financial subsidy and consideration. Very few patients have the capacity to fund the extended program - all patient inquiries are centred on the fact that they suffer complex disability with very little form of aid and support other than 'palliative care'.

The link following is available from our site and prepared by the Hocoma International Zurich - the manufacturers of Lokomat and a range of other innovative Neurorehabilitation robots.

http://www.spinalrehab.com.au/HyperMED/REF_Lokomat_World_0803_en.pdf

Specifically to you questions:

- We have been approached on repeated occasions requesting hospital provider number and item code for HBOT and Lokomat. Referrals have not occurred simply due to the fact that we are a private non hospital facility and the fact that no item code exists regarding HBOT for neurodegenerative disorders and no item code exists for Lokomat.
- TAC and Work cover have been repeatedly approached by individual patients but again the fact that no medical item codes exists results in denial of TAC and Work Cover insurance coverage.
- No state or government department has referred however most are aware of our clinical services and availability. Their appears to be a mind set that if an item code has not been allocated then great suspicion exists!

More recently we have established the NeuroRecovery Foundation Australia which mirrors the Christopher Reeves Foundation – we are currently pursuing DGR status. Our hope and endeavours is to be able to raise the 'NeuroRecovery' profile and appropriate funds in order to provide necessary treatments to patients who need assistance. It is the objective of the Foundation to partner and form alliance with appropriate bodies to further 'Australian based' research.

Currently there are no Australian based peer review publications – simply we have been the first to provide clinical services in this difficult 'space'.

Drug companies provide an abundance of continuing financial support to hospitals with university alliance. The commercialisation of these endeavours was again published this past week in The Financial Review!

HyperMED is committed to providing clinical methods that assist individuals with complex disability – it is my personal vision that perhaps one day I also will contribute to humanity and make a difference!

Kind regards,

Mal Hooper
HyperMED Australia

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From: Axel.Scholz@dhs.vic.gov.au [mailto:Axel.Scholz@dhs.vic.gov.au]

Sent: Wednesday, 2 July 2008 5:27 PM

To: general@spinalrehab.com.au

Subject: HyperMED NeuroRecovery

Dear Dr Hooper

Your name has been given to me as the contact person regarding the above treatment at HyperMed.

I am wanting to determine the eligibility of the hyperbaric oxygenation and Lokomat regime treatment for one of our support users. Essentially I am looking for clinical support

Would you please advise whether you have received referrals from, or provide support arranged through:

- any Victorian rehabilitation hospitals for this treatment during the last 2 years;
- any statutory authorities (such as TAC, Workcover) for such treatment during the last 2 years;
- any state or government department for such treatment during the last 2 years.

It would also be helpful if you would direct me to, or advise of peer reviewed references and/or Australian-based clinical support for this treatment.

regards

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