51/NWP/SCM

Rehabilitation medicine

Understanding pathology, impairment, disability and handicap

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## Background Information

The Regional Rehabilitation Unit (RRU) at Northwick Park Hospital is a rehabilitation unit for working age adults with severe complex disabilities – usually following brain injury (stroke, trauma, hypoxia, etc). The unit is under the leadership of Professor Lynne Turner-Stokes and is staffed by a multi-disciplinary team of doctors, nurses and paramedical staff including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, psychologists, social worker, etc.

There are 22 in-patient beds, which provides complex specialised rehabilitation for residents of the London and Eastern regions and beyond and a specialist community out-reach team supporting the community teams in the North West London, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex.

Dr Andrew Thu is the clinical lead for the inpatient service and Dr Charlie Nyein is head of the specialist community outreach service. The inpatient service is also supported by Dr Anand Trip, Consultant Neurologist.

## Aims and Objectives

Imagine you woke up tomorrow having had a stroke or severe head injury. Imagine all four limbs are paralysed, you are unable to speak and difficulty understanding much of what people say to you.

How would you cope?

How would you begin to pick up the threads of your life and adjust to living with a disability?

Could you get back to living at home or back to work?

What types of equipment and other support might be available to help you?

During the three-week attachment, students will follow individual patients through their therapy programmes. They will spend time with the various different disciplines who make up the multi-disciplinary team, learning what each profession can contribute and how the team works together to restore the individual to the best possible physical, social and psychological function. Through working with the team both on the Rehabilitation Ward and in the patient’s own home, students will have the opportunity to observe at first hand the impact of pathology and impairment on disability and handicap in different environments.

## Key Learning Events

In addition to weekly tutorials with the consultant staff to discuss their specific cases, students will learn some useful skills such as:

* How to communicate with a severely dysphasic patient
* How to assess disability and care needs
* How to manage incontinence, spasticity, epilepsy, sexual dysfunction and other distressing sequelae of brain injury
* How to support distressed and grieving relatives

## Recommended Reading

Appropriate chapters of Rehabilitation of the Physically Disabled Adult, 2nd edition,

MA Chamberlain, J Goodwill and C Evans, Thornes 1997.

## Assessment

You will present three cases to the facilitator concentrating on your understanding of Pathology, Impairment, Disability and Handicap in younger patients with severe complex disabilities.

**Maximum number of students per period:** 3

**Available in Period:** All