



PUEA *Pain: Understanding, Exercise, Adapt*

November 2009

Welcome to the second edition of the PUEA Post. Maintaining and building upon progress in managing pain after PUEA finishes is a key issue for everyone who attends the programme. We send this newsletter out every six months or so as a way of keeping you in touch with our news, and also as a reminder of what you learned on the course. We welcome contributions, particularly news of your achievements, whether they are big or small.

PUEA News

Five groups have now completed PUEA and our sixth group started in October. Now we have been running for a while, one of the great things for us as a staff team has been catching up again with some of our initial groups at the nine month follow-up. It has been great for us to hear of the changes which people have made and in particular to see how experienced ex-participants have become in managing their pain. We have made a few changes to the programme as a result of feedback from our early groups and one of these was to involve spouses/relatives/friends at an earlier point in the programme. We have now made day one an introductory day for 'supporters' to attend if they wish, as well as attending on the final day on the programme. For our group whom have just graduated, it was wonderful to see so many of their supporters attending to talk about how the pain affects them and how they might best be able to help.

Past participant news

We have our first PUEA baby! Congratulations to Michelle Cranson of PUEA February 2009 whom gave birth to Cooper James on 10th September 2009. One of the great things about babies is that they do allow you to build up some tolerances gradually! Please see Michelle's contribution below on how having Cooper has affected her thoughts about her pain.



*Cooper James Malone
Born 10.09.09 at 4.06am*

After all the fantastic treatments and methods I've tried for Chronic pain, I never thought that the answer would be having a child! Don't get me wrong, the pain is still very much there and getting worse as Cooper gains weight (a pound a week at the moment!) but now my thoughts do not lie with how sore I am and my own needs, but those of my beautiful little boy.

I'm really not sure how my pain could have been or was affected by the complications of our five day labour, but now I know what pain really is! So in a way I am thankful that my pain is not as bad as I now know pain can get! Obviously my life has had a huge shift in focus and pain is minute compared to the happiness our wee man brings. My coping mechanisms have gone out the window and its more a matter of just doing what needs to be done and dealing with the consequences afterwards. And what new mum really has time to do that! The



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distraction is a welcome one and there is no time for dwelling on anything negative. I've never thought of myself as a negative person and Cooper has made life even happier than I could have imagined.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and kindness through my pregnancy, and we are looking forward to seeing everyone again in January. A final word that inspired me recently: 'Life is like a game of tennis. It doesn't matter how a ball comes at you, it's what you do with it when it arrives that makes the difference'.

Team News

We were very fortunate in that nearly all of us were able to attend the NZ Pain Society conference in Rotorua in July (Nic was ill unfortunately). It was a fantastic three days for us and we particularly enjoyed presentations by some of the authors of the key books we recommend - Lorimer Moseley whom wrote 'Explain Pain', and Michael Nicholas, the main author of 'Manage Your Pain'. Rachael and Kate Shelver are to be congratulated on completing their first pain management papers with the University of Otago. Kate Treves enjoyed a day's visit to the Bath Centre for Pain Services in the UK in July. Their Unit runs separate three week residential pain management programmes for people whom are at different stages in the lifespan – adolescents, young adults, adults and older people.

On a personal note our most exciting team news is that Rachael, our pain educator, is getting married next year, with her wedding planned on a wild west theme!

Lorna's thoughts corner

Useful website links for information and support

ACC www.acc.co.nz Lots of information about preventing and managing injuries

Alcoholics Anonymous alcoholics-anonymous.org.nz

Angina as a persistent pain www.angina.org

Arthritis New Zealand www.arthritis.org.nz

Black Dog Institute www.blackdoginstitute.org.au
For help with mood disorders.

Burwood Academy of Independent Living www.burwood.org.nz

Guided relaxation www.calm.auckland.ac.nz

Health Information for New Zealanders' www.everybody.co.nz

Healthtalkonline www.healthtalkonline.org (peoples experience self-managing with health problems)

Health Navigator www.healthnavigator.org.nz useful tips for living with long-term health conditions

Health Point www.healthpoint.co.nz Local information - specialist referral.

Lifeline www.lifeline.org.nz Free counselling service

Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand www.mentalhealth.org

Medsafe www.medsafe.govt.nz Information about medicines

The Ministry of Health www.moh.govt.nz

Multiple Sclerosis Society NZ www.msanz.org.nz

New Zealand Pain Society www.nzps.org.nz

NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

Pain Concern www.painconcern.org.uk

Pain Relief Foundation www.painreliefoundation.org.uk

Parkinson New Zealand www.parkinsons.org.nz

Pelvic Pain Support Network www.pelvicpain.org.uk

Samaritans www.samaritans.org.nz

Sleep Foundation www.sleepfoundation.org

Stroke New Zealand www.stroke.org.nz

The Lowdown www.thelowdown.co.nz Helping youth with depression

Trigeminal Neuralgia Association UK www.tna-uk.org.uk





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These are from the NZ version of the Pain Tool Kit booklet that I know many of you will have seen and read. However, how many of you have used the web pages? If you have access to a computer then some of these are really great (road tested by myself and other volunteers) One of my unexpected favourites is the Ministry of Health web page. If you go to this one it leads you to other, reliable sources of information on everything from Swine flu to Dandruff! I recently used it to help a family member make some choices about treatment for something I knew nothing about. It's not just for pain management.

Help needed

We still have a few people whom we think would benefit from PUEA but they are unsure about what it is all about and whether it would be worth attending. It would be great if we had a list of people who would be willing to be contacted (by phone or email) by people who are unsure to briefly explain how they found being on PUEA, and how they benefited from it. For the same reason it would also be wonderful if someone could write an anonymous account of their experience on the programme which we could hand out.

We are also collecting the names of volunteers to put a 'Life After PUEA' session on the programme where an ex-participant gives a short talk about how they have coped since leaving the course and is willing to answer any questions. Carol Crossman, whom completed PUEA just a few months ago, has been our first 'Life After PUEA' speaker, giving an inspiring account of how she has changed her attitude to her pain but also recounting how she coped with an acute back injury (not her persistent pain site) quite differently than she would have done as a result of attending PUEA. We have a couple of interested parties but if we have a small pool of volunteers then it would only need to be a commitment of once every 6 months or so. For anyone with goals of increasing their confidence or returning to work it might be a great opportunity.

Please let the hospital know if you change address or alternatively if you do not want to receive this newsletter by contacting our pain educator on ext 7532 (ring Base Hospital 753 6139 or for South Taranaki, Hawera Hospital 278 7109).