Fitting the pieces together: Education, outreach and optimising burn rehabilitation across NSW and beyond

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Background

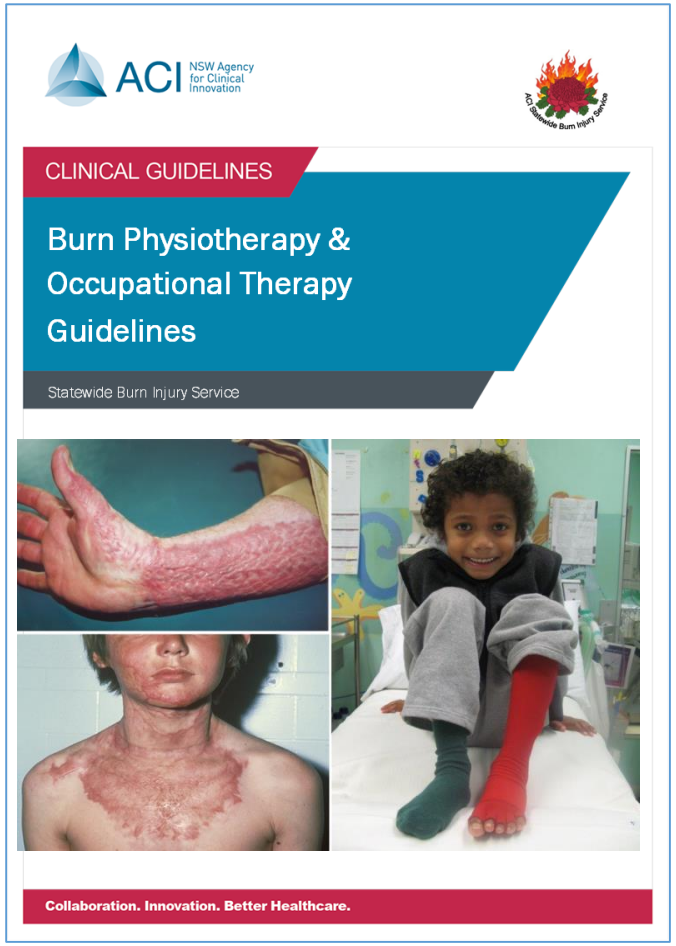
Since the inception of the New South Wales (NSW) Statewide Burn Injury Service (SBIS) in 2004, the Physiotherapy (PT) Occupational Therapy (OT) Special Interest Group (SIG) has led in the education of burn rehabilitation in NSW. In addition, to providing face-to-face education to medical, nursing and allied health staff, the group has also published local clinical practice guidelines specific to the provision of burn therapy in NSW. These consensus guidelines are intended to support therapists new to the area of burn care and who do not work in the acute burn care setting.

As part of its ongoing commitment to continuing education, the PT OT SIG have now embarked on producing a burn rehabilitation competency list to further aid in the clinical education of therapists new to burn rehabilitation who manage burn patients in their local setting.

Method

The newly revised NSW Burn Physiotherapy & Occupational Therapy Guidelines reflect a common ground frame of reference regardless of the experience of the therapist.

Drawing on and borrowing from, a mix of existing competencies the SIG workshopped, over a number of meetings, to develop locally applicable competencies to address the skills and knowledge required to deliver safe and effective burn care.



Competencies

The competencies developed cover multiple areas of both knowledge and skill and are intended to be used as a learning tool/package. There is a base list to be met then with more detailed step-wise specific competencies for complex procedures such as specific splint fabrication. The level of competency to be met in regards to the staff position held is also addressed such as a junior rotating position, student placement and senior role.

BURN THERAPY COMPETENCY TOPICS	
Principles	Pressure care
Burn classification	Exercise
Fluid resuscitation	Splinting /positioning
Wound healing	Compression
Infection control	Silicone products
Surgical techniques	Skin care
Oedema management.	Massage
Education & communication	Complications and comorbidities

Conclusion

While other competencies already exist (Parry et al., 2011; Parry et al., 2017), the group's objective is for these guidelines and competency list to empower local therapists to learn and care for their burn patients using accessible, up-to-date clinical practices based on sound principles of burn therapy and standardisation of care in NSW.