

Occupational Therapy Services in Two Earthquake Zones

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Voices of the Users: *Exploration of User Satisfaction of Assistive Technology (AT) in Mainland China*

On 5.12.2008 an earthquake occurred in Sichuan province, China. More than 250,000 people suffered injuries, such as fractures, amputations and spinal cord injuries. One of the immediate responses was to donate assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, walking aids, orthoses and prostheses and these were welcomed.

However, during our work as a resource centre in the post-earthquake zones, we have identified and collected many unused assistive devices. Even three years later, individualized prescription of AT is rare due to the lack of occupational therapists. We identified a need to strengthen the process of providing AT by rehabilitation therapists in China.

In April 2011, we conducted an exploratory survey of user satisfaction of their assistive devices. We used the collected data to drive the writing of guidelines for rehabilitation therapists with the aim of improving prescription of assistive devices.

'Stepping Up When Things are Falling Down' *Reflections on 12 months of shaking in Christchurch, New Zealand – the ongoing impact on people, practice and personality. .*

4.20am Sept 4th 2010. I was dragged from my sleep in the early hours of the morning, my bed rocking from side to side. I could hear the rumble coming toward me, like a freight train in full flight. I reached for my torch and turned it on in time to see my little cottage walls go 'bang' - they shunted inwards and outward as if giant hands were on the outside pushing them in - I had never seen anything like it, and never want to again. I have never been so frightened in my life.

The entire house was shaking, the ground throwing it from side to side. I had never experienced an Earthquake and I had no idea what was happening. I had no idea what was going on, I thought we were sinking and that I would never get back to Australia to see my family. My daughter called out from her room and I knew I had to pull it together and think clearly. Tears streamed down my face, as I couldn't stand up to get to my daughter, and needed to wait - against all of my mothers instincts.

The September quake, a baby compared to what was to come,

12.51pm, 22 February 2011. Christchurch shook - heralding the beginning of 'a new kind of normal'. No-one had any idea how things would change.

2nd October 2011 - people's lives are changed. The city has been shut down for over 6 months. People have lost their jobs, their houses, and more importantly loved ones. We sometimes feel like we are on a ship, floating out to sea. The land is not what it once was for us - we have to find a new grounding – often somewhere within ourselves, often without the people and things that were there before.

The impact of the quakes are really just being seen now. The initial physical impact, and awful loss of lives, is immediate. The long term changes are just now becoming clear – it is a whole new playing field. Not only has the ground beneath us shaken, but we have now been living in a 'stress state' for over 12 months, and our very paradigm of living has changed. Not only have people's lives changed – people themselves have changed – and often they don't understand why.

Being personally impacted by the quakes coupled with having a practice based at an integrative Medical Practice and working with children and adults who have sensory processing disorder has allowed me to observe the ongoing impact and effect of the quakes from a different perspective. This presentation will be a reflection on how things have changed – both within my OT practice and what I have observed with others around me.