

Mandy Hannan

A Day in the Life of a Cardiorespiratory Physiotherapist





Senior Physiotherapist Penny Schofield guides students through the process of using a tilt table

To a brand new physiotherapy student, cardiorespiratory physiotherapy can be eye opening and confronting. Students tend to focus on the not so pleasant aspects of a physiotherapist's role, such as assisting a patient to remove thick green sputum from their chest, accompanied by frightful noises or having to manage attachments filled with bodily fluids as they assist patients to walk.

Students can lose sight of the real reason this area of physiotherapy is so exciting and rewarding.

A cardiorespiratory physiotherapist is able to literally save someone's life by removing the secretions that are preventing a patient from breathing. They can assist someone to return to their own home by helping them improve their balance and mobility rather than having to be placed in a nursing home.

Cardiorespiratory physiotherapists can ensure that patients are returned to their loved ones as quickly as possible and prevent potentially life threatening complications of surgery.

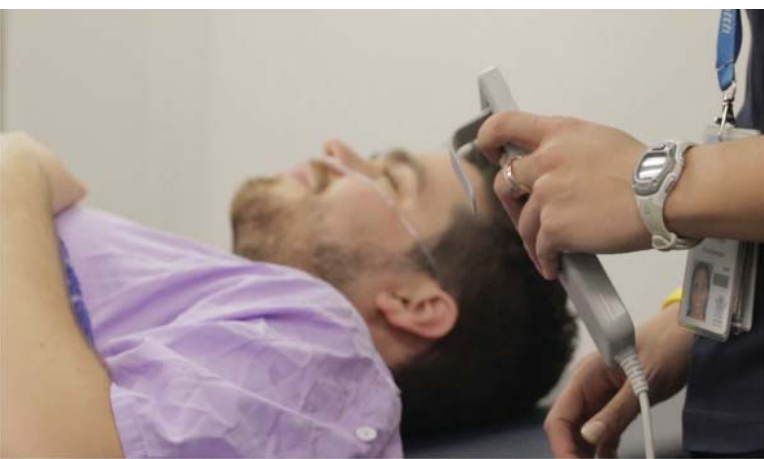
No one wants to be in hospital, and being able to provide a friendly smile and a chat can brighten a person's day.

The Project Idea

Assistant Professor Mandy Hannan wanted to emphasise the positive aspects of cardiorespiratory physiotherapy to help engage and motivate her students. She wanted students to embrace their learning and look forward to clinical placement.

Mandy decided to capture this enthusiasm through the production of a video that show-cased the real world experiences of a cardiorespiratory physiotherapist. She contacted several physiotherapists working in the area and asked for their assistance to help produce videos that would capture "A Day in the Life of a Cardiorespiratory Physiotherapist."

Physiotherapists from the Gold Coast University Hospital were very supportive and couldn't wait to get started. The support team from the Office of Learning and Teaching also offered assistance with the filming and editing of the videos. So the idea was put in motion.



Project Planning

Initially Mandy wrote a script of the required video, sent it to the Office of Learning and Teaching and then met with the physiotherapists for their approval.

It was important to personalise the video by allowing the physiotherapists to tell their stories. These physiotherapists were once students, who thought at the outset, that they would become sports physiotherapists and for varying reasons found themselves drawn to cardiorespiratory physiotherapy.

The aim of the video was for the physiotherapists to talk about what they loved most about their career choice and to give a brief summary of what a typical day for them was like.

The video was to be shown as part of the introduction to the subject and students were to go straight in to clinical placement afterwards. Therefore it was important to illustrate the step by step process that a real physiotherapist used when carrying out their day to day role. It was vital that this process could be easily replicated so students could use the same steps on their placement.

Production

The day of filming arrived and armed with thank you muffins, the team met at the Gold Coast University Hospital and had a fun morning filming. The enthusiasm for the area was portrayed well and didn't require too many takes.

Filming featured a physiotherapist working through a ward list and explaining how they used their clinical reasoning to prioritise the patients they would see.

The physiotherapist was recorded looking at a patient's electronic medical record and chest x-rays.

She discussed what questions would be asked of the multidisciplinary team before seeing the patient, and what could be gauged about the patient from looking at the bedside chart.

Other physiotherapists demonstrated the correct way to wash hands, how they documented assessment and treatment and discussed clinical reasoning around discharge planning.

Challenges

The original plan was to film a physiotherapist performing an assessment and treatment with a real life patient who had undergone cardiac surgery, however due to circumstances outside the team's control the filming was delayed.

Everything had been discussed and approved however, the day before the surgery was cancelled.

Plan B was to film a patient in the intensive care unit, but at the last moment filming approval was retracted by the manager, and there were no other suitable patients.

Additionally, physiotherapists could not be spared for the allocated filming time as they were extra busy. This resulted in an additional filming day being required which was completed at Robina Hospital.

Further plans were complicated by the arrival of newborns within the team.

The videos produced were longer than originally anticipated so they were edited into shorter clips. Physiotherapists' stories were played as part of the introductory lecture, and other clips were uploaded to iLearn so that students could access them whenever they wished.



Senior Physiotherapist Penny Schofield analyses a patient's X-Ray



Illustrating the importance of the correct hand washing procedure

Feedback Received

There was a visible increase in student engagement with this year's cohort, and several students mentioned that they were now thinking of working in this area in the future. Mandy noted that students had never mentioned an interest in Cardiorespiratory Physiotherapy to her in the past. At this early stage there is no specific feedback from students about the videos, however a structured survey will be conducted after student placement to ascertain whether students found these videos helpful.

Final thoughts

Although there were a few unavoidable challenges along the way, Mandy had a great time undergoing this project, despite accepting the realisation that a movie star in the making she is not. Mandy's advice for academics who would enjoy a similar project is to remember that all good plans can go astray when sick patients, busy wards and pregnant spouses are thrown in the mix. Be prepared to be flexible and adaptable, realise you may have to film on several occasions but most importantly know that the end result, being able to inspire, engage and motivate your students by exposing them to the real world is invaluable. ■

Mandy is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine at Bond University.

She has a Bachelor of Physiotherapy, Masters of Scientific Studies and Bachelor of Applied Science Human Movement from The University of Queensland.

Mandy worked for over 15 years within cardiac rehabilitation and was the Cardiac Rehabilitation Manager for the Gold Coast Health Service District for 5 years before joining Bond University.

She held positions as a Senior Physiotherapist both here and in Ireland working primarily in acute medical/surgical wards and oncology. Mandy also managed a private musculoskeletal and hydrotherapy practice in Ireland and was the Team Physiotherapist for the Suttonian Rugby first team.

She has also developed educational DVDs for physiotherapy students which included interactive online workbooks in Ireland. Mandy is a PhD candidate within the Health Sciences and Medicine Faculty.