

# **THE CHALLENGES OF REHABILITATION IN A PERSON WITH MORBID OBESITY AND CERIVICAL SPINAL CORD INJURY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Obesity is a worldwide epidemic and its morbidity and mortality rates increase yearly. The implications of obesity are multifactorial and not restricted to associated health issues. As the incidence of obesity rises, we are beginning to understand the impacts on other disabilities such as spinal cord injury (SCI). The aim of this poster is to explore issues associated with the rehabilitation of a person with SCI and morbid obesity.

## **METHOD(S)**

A retrospective analysis auditing the length of time of standard protocol based SCI rehabilitation practices and provision of equipment for a bariatric patient with a C5 AIS C SCI. Financial and resourcing implications were assessed and compared with patients of the same injury level.

## **RESULT(S)**

Length of time increased for the bariatric patient for first MRI scan (47 days), medical clearance to initial mobilization (36 days) and from injury to commencement of gym based rehabilitation (64 days) compared to non-bariatric patients of the same level. Average daily cost of rehabilitation per night was doubled when compared to standard costs.

## **CONCLUSION(S)**

Significant delays in medical imaging and rehabilitation occurred due to obesity related issues. There were increased financial costs and resourcing pressures which delayed rehabilitation. Rehabilitation centres need to consider increasing staffing numbers and purchasing bariatric equipment in order to adequately provide rehabilitation and avoid treatment and therapy delays which increase length of stay in bariatric patients with SCI. The purchase of bariatric equipment to future proof rehabilitation centres should be considered given the rising incidence and prevalence of obesity.