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Activate – A new multidisciplinary Oncology Outpatient Program

Delegates to Occupational Therapy Australia's (OTA) 2020 Virtual OT Exchange have been told that a new oncology rehabilitation program is improving reported quality of life for people living with cancer.

Melbourne based occupational therapist, Miss Meggan McNeill, played an integral role in the implementation of the new oncology outpatient program at Donvale Rehabilitation Hospital in 2019.

"Side effects of cancer treatment limit participation in everyday routines and reduce overall quality of life," Miss McNeill said.

"There's a growing demand for healthcare services that support people living with cancer to maintain their independence and engage in meaningful occupations."

Activate is a six-week outpatient program established to support patients during and after cancer treatment. Twice per week, participants engage in one hour of exercise followed by a comprehensive education session, covering topics such as stress management, healthy sleep patterns, community support services, activity pacing and energy conservation techniques.

The efficacy of the program was then evaluated based on admission and discharge outcome measures, as well as consumer feedback. Results demonstrated positive trends in patients' reported level of physical activity, participation and quality of life.

"Emerging evidence supports both the concept of oncology rehabilitation and the role of occupational therapists in these programs," Miss McNeill concluded.

"As part of a multidisciplinary care team, occupational therapists can address the need for psychosocial and education-based support during oncology rehabilitation."

Approximately 500 occupational therapists have converged – virtually – on the 2020 OT Exchange, the first of OTA's national conferences to be delivered entirely online.

The conference features 93 scientific presentations and three workshops focussed on four key areas of occupational therapy practice: Driving, Rehabilitation, Paediatrics and Environmental Modifications. It runs from 14 to 15 September.

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About Occupational Therapy Australia

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