



HAND & UPPER LIMB THERAPY

Paper Code: 589701

Information Sheet

What is the basic idea behind the paper?

The hand is an amazingly complex and intricate instrument. As a primary means by which people manipulate things in the environment the hand and upper limb are prone to damage and injury. Function follows form. As such any underlying pathology of the hand or injury can have a major impact on a person's ability to interact within their environment or to engage in their occupations of choice. This paper offers physiotherapy and occupational therapy practitioners the opportunity to explore a wide range of hand and upper limb problems and to learn from expert clinicians and each other how to assess and manage some of the common hand injuries and impairments.

Who is this paper for?

This paper is for registered physiotherapists and occupational therapists who are currently working in the field of hand therapy, working in a general setting with clients who present with hand and upper limb impairments, or those looking to secure employment as a hand therapist in the future.

What experience/qualifications do I need to take this postgraduate paper?

This paper requires that you have a good working knowledge of anatomy of the hand and upper quartile as well as recent experience with clients with hand and upper limb impairments. As a benchmark, we recommend that you have anatomy knowledge and applied anatomy skills at graduate level, and at least one year of practice experience. Practitioners must hold a current annual practising certificate.

When will the paper run?

The paper is a full year enrolment and runs through semesters one and two. In 2012 this begins 27 February and ends 28 September. There are three on-campus weekends when you will need to come to Auckland. Dates for 2012 are 19 - 22 April, 28 June - 1 July, and 12 -16 September. For the rest of the year you study extramurally with readings, online discussion and assignment preparation.

How much time will I need to commit to the paper?

This obviously depends on your other commitments and the speed at which you learn and work, but you should expect to work somewhere around 10 hours per week on this paper.

Do I need to be proficient on a computer?

As part of the course, you will engage in online discussion groups on research and practice topics related to hand therapy. You also need to access the AUT e-library. You will need to have a working computer and an internet connection to take part in this (broadband will be ideal). You will need to know how to download files, open attachments and navigate around websites.

How is the paper taught?

As a postgraduate paper, our emphasis is on bringing our collective experience to bear on the paper's content rather than dictating what is to be 'taught'. We will use a variety of teaching and learning techniques in the paper, including small group study, problem based learning, formal presentations, practical classes, on-line discussion forums, and others besides. For many this will be a new experience, therefore our emphasis is upon building a mutually supportive, respectful community of learners. A number of advanced hand therapists contribute to the learning. Our role will be as facilitators rather than teachers. We have our own personal and professional experience to bring to the programme, but our role is to create an environment where we can all learn from each other.

What is the paper's content?

This paper will include the discussion and evaluation of the theoretical and applied aspects of hand and upper limb assessment and treatment strategies, including surgical management, with reference to both clinical protocols and experimental research. The validity and reliability of differential tests and clinical management strategies and programs for a range of given hand and upper limb conditions, will be investigated and discussed. Structural, pathological and physiological mechanisms contributing to hand and upper limb dysfunction and the consequences of interventions will be discussed. Potential areas for future research into the efficacy of hand and upper limb therapy will be identified.

Topics will include but not be restricted to:

- Biomechanics, pathomechanics, and pathophysiology relating to all hand and upper limb disorders.
- Advanced knowledge of functional anatomy.
- Clinical assessment strategies and evaluation of their effectiveness.
- Hand and upper limb concepts of treatment relating to hand and upper limb conditions.
- Efficacy of re-education of movement, sensibility and function of the hand through activity and exercise.
- Traumatic hand and upper limb presentations, including fractures, joint injuries, tendons, nerves, skin, multiple injuries.
- Pathologic hand and upper limb conditions. arthritis/osis, tendonopathies, nerve compressions, dupuytren's, pain syndromes, congenital conditions.
- Principles and application of controlled stress to healing tissue. Efficacy of the use of static, serial static and dynamic splinting in hand dysfunction.
- Addressing functional deficits and re-integration into work and other life roles.
- Psychosocial considerations of hand and upper limb dysfunction and therapeutic management.

What kind of reading materials will I need?

The book we will refer to most often will be Prosser, R . & Conolly, W.B. (Eds.). (2003). *Rehabilitation of the hand and upper limb*. It would be helpful to have a copy of this text in advance of the course. Copies will be available through the University Book Shop and an electronic copy is available through the AUT library.

How will it be assessed?

There are four modes of assessment. Participation in the online discussion is evaluated across the year. The poster is due at the beginning of block 2, the written presentation is due between blocks 2 & 3, and the final case presentation is due at the end of block 3.

1. Poster Presentation

This involves the preparation and 15-minute verbal presentation of a poster describing and justifying the effectiveness of intervention for a given pathology of the hand and/or upper limb. Students will select their topic from a list of topics provided by the paper leader. All posters will be displayed prior to the presentations and will be posted electronically on AUTonline following the assessment.

2. Written Assignment

This assignment involves the critical evaluation and assimilation of current research evidence from clinical and scientific sources pertinent to a topic of interest in hand and upper limb therapy. Students will formulate an original scholarly argument that discusses research evidence for the effects and mechanisms of hand or upper limb therapy interventions and management strategies with regard to a specific pathology.

3. Oral Case defense examination

This oral defense assesses the student's ability to demonstrate and articulate competent practice at an advanced level. Under examination conditions, students will be given a case description and case evidence and required to describe and/or demonstrate interventions based on reasoned scientific principles. The examination will focus on knowledge and skill in assessment of the hand and upper limb, application of assessment findings and clinical reasoning.

4. Online discussion

In this assessment, students critically dialogue relevant literature and clinical practice presentations and intervention through online discussion groups

Who is leading the paper?

Edel Kelly is the paper leader and will facilitate the online discussion as well as scheduled sessions in each on-campus block. Valerie Wright-St Clair is the paper coordinator.

Edel is a Physiotherapist with 20 years of clinical experience and has been working as a Hand Therapist for 13 years with a Musculoskeletal and Neuro-Rehabilitation background. She is a Registered Hand Therapist (NZAHT) and a Certified Hand Therapist (USA) and has been involved in Post Graduate education in the field of

Hand Therapy for the past 4-5 years. She is currently undertaking research at AUT with a particular focus on the hand in order to complete a Masters in Health Science.

Valerie is a New Zealand qualified and registered occupational therapist with 20 years experience in tertiary education for health practitioners. She teaches predominantly in the undergraduate occupational therapy degree and multidisciplinary postgraduate papers.

How much does the paper cost?

Enrolment fees for 2012 have not yet been set by the University. For budgeting purposes, estimated costs are approximately \$1000-\$1200 per 15 points, therefore enrolment in this 45-point paper may cost approximately NZD \$3000-\$3600.

Is splinting taught within the paper?

A basic 1-day and an advanced 2-day splinting workshop are independently offered by Surgical Synergies. Therapists who wish to advance their splinting skills are recommended to enroll in one or both splinting workshops at an estimated cost of \$150 per day. Both workshops will be conducted at the AUT University North Shore campus immediately prior to the May and August on-campus blocks. Successful completion of these workshops, or their equivalent, is recognised by the New Zealand Association of Hand Therapy as a requirement for registration in New Zealand as a hand therapist.

Provisional Dates for 2012 are:

TBA

Therapists wishing to register for the splinting workshops should contact Sharon Rudkin srudkin@surgicalsynergies.co.nz

When and how do you enrol?

Enrol in the paper as early as possible as it takes several weeks to process applications and have students ready to start with the online discussion at the beginning of semester I. The viability of the paper depends on having enough people enrol, and a decision needs to be made by Christmas. Therefore, if you can enrol by no later than 17 December 2011 that will make it easier for us to make our decision and give you clear information so that you can make your own plans for 2012.

Details on how to enrol can be found at the AUT University website: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/> or <http://www.aut.ac.nz/postgraduate/>

And answers to frequently asked questions about postgraduate study at AUT can be found here: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/postgraduate/faqs.htm>

Regards,
Edel & Valerie