

**Do homeless people
need physiotherapy and
can they access it?**

**Considering
physiotherapy provision
in Glasgow and London**



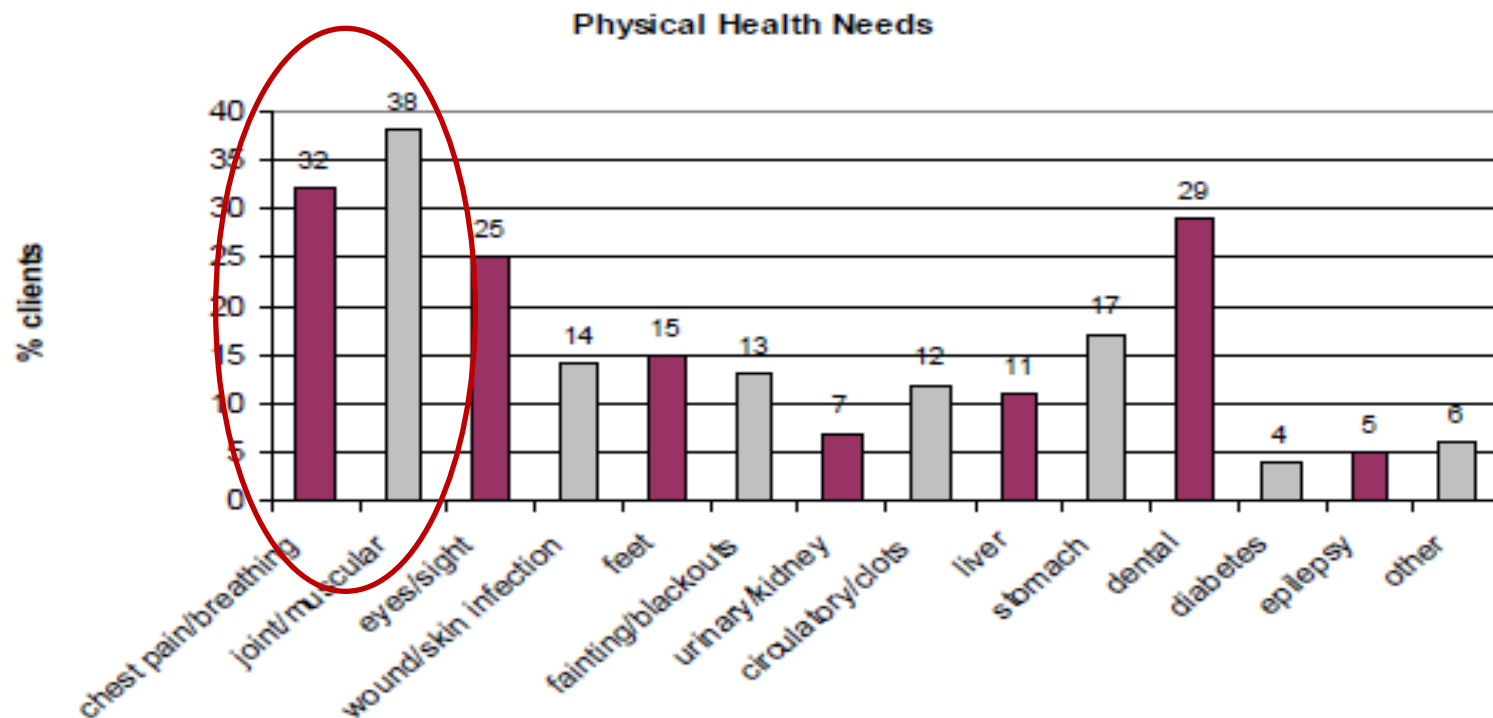
Do homeless people need physiotherapy?

- Homelessness characterised by “tri-morbidity” (Hewett et al, 2012)
- Homeless people seven times the chance of dying from falls than general population (Crisis, 2012)



Do homeless people need physiotherapy?

Ref: Homeless Link (2010) "The health and wellbeing of people who are homeless: Evidence from a national audit"



Condition	General Population	Homeless People
musculoskeletal problems	10%	38%
respiratory problems	5%	32%

Can homeless people access physiotherapy?

- Primary referral to physio via GP or consultant
- 15% of homeless people not registered with a GP (Homeless Link, 2010)
- Only 66% of homeless people considered their GP as a provider of support for health problems (Homeless Link, 2010)

Physiotherapy service in Glasgow piloted 1996, evolved 1997-2007

- Health centre, out patient service
- Drop in clinics in voluntary organisation
- Domiciliary outreach service
- Strong relationship with mainstream physiotherapy
- Education programme



Voluntary Physiotherapy Service, Edinburgh



street**smart** physio

free treatment and outreach street service

- 10 voluntary, HCPC registered physiotherapists
- Weekly clinics in local homeless shelters
- Holistic advice, assessment and treatment to patients.
- Good communication links with the NHS

Crisis at Christmas Physiotherapy service



What have homeless people been presenting to physiotherapy with?

Primary presenting problem	Glasgow NHS service 2005-2007 (Mean % of caseload)	CC2012 (% of caseload) n = 104	CC2013 (% of caseload) n = 155
Chronic soft tissue	28	39	45
Poor mobility	25	1	1
Fracture	14	3	3
Acute soft tissue	12	27	31
Walking aid provision	4	4	5
Peripheral nerve injury	4	6	7
Central neurological	3	1	1
Rheumatological	2	6	7
Amputee	1	0	0
Respiratory	1	3	3
Miscellaneous other	4	11	13

Based on data from CC2013, could homeless people presenting have accessed mainstream physiotherapy?



Previous help about presenting complaint

Previously sought help

	n	%
Yes	64	49%
No	48	37%
Unknown	18	14%
Total	130	100%

From which service?

	n	%
Hospital	21	33%
GP	18	28%
Physio	12	19%
Other service	4	6%
Crisis	4	6%
Unknown	5	8%
Total	64	100%

GP registration and recent hospital attendance

GP registration

	n = 124	%
Yes	90	73%
No	25	20%
Unknown	9	7%

Hospital attendance within 3/12 of presenting to physiotherapy at Crisis

	n = 124	%
Yes	39	31%
No	75	60%
Unknown	10	8%

So, what is happening now?



- Continue with Crisis at Christmas service
- Collaboration with colleagues in Edinburgh
- Gant application underway for further research

And the future...

- Should the voluntary sector be the main provider?
- Do homeless people need a better understanding of physiotherapy?
- Can mainstream physiotherapy better accommodate our homeless population?



References

- Kirsten Scheurle (2001) *Glasgow photographs, Great Eastern Hotel*
- Thomas, B (2012) *Homelessness kills: An analysis of the mortality of homeless people in early twenty-first century England*, London: Crisis
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- Office of National Statistics (2008) General Lifestyle Survey, www.ons.gov.uk.