

Older Persons' Health Specialist Service

Haere mai, welcome

A warm welcome will await you from all of the staff at Older Persons' Health Specialist Service (OPHSS), whether you join our close-knit teams for a few months to get some general experience or whether you are planning to train and specialise in this area of medicine.

Why work in Older Persons Health?

With the ageing population, the health of older people has increasing importance and knowledge of the complex issues will be important, no matter what area of medicine you eventually work in. Where better in New Zealand to get that experience than in OPHSS, which provides a comprehensive range of geriatric and old age psychiatry services for over 70,000 people over the age of 65yrs. Canterbury is at the forefront of the care of older people and a number of innovative service models of care have been developed recently.

Where are we based?

The majority of our services are at Burwood Hospital in purpose-built facilities. We have a comprehensive Radiology service on-site and have close connections with the other departments at Burwood Hospital - Orthopaedics, Spinal Unit, Brain Injury service and Pain Management. The facility includes dedicated workspace and social space for RMOs. Community-based services are located across a variety of sites in Christchurch.

About our service

There are 6 Older Persons Health Inpatient (OPH) wards, including a specialised stroke rehabilitation ward and an orthopaedic rehabilitation ward, 2 Older Persons Mental Health (OPMH) wards, psychiatry of old age day hospital, general and specialised community service teams including community stroke and psychiatry of old age teams. Consultation-liaison services are provided from both the general and psychiatric side to other hospitals and services in Canterbury. General outpatient clinics are augmented with specialised memory clinic and bone clinics, and liaison with the regional movement disorders clinic. There is a dedicated older age ECT service.

There are a number of linkages across the CDHB through the Senior Medical Officer (SMO) workforce including Geriatricians working both in OPHSS as well as other areas such as General Medicine, Orthopaedic Medicine, Surgical Medicine, Stroke Medicine as well as Bone Health Services.

Medical kaimahi (staff) in our service

Within Geriatric Medicine, there are 14 FTE SMO (20 staff) and 20 FTE RMO (11 Registrars and 9 House Officers). In OPMH, there are 7.6 FTE SMO (11 staff including 2 Medical Officers) and 3.5 FTE RMO (2.5 Registrars and 1 House Officer).

There is an ongoing close relationship between OPHSS and the University of Otago (Christchurch School of Medicine) with the University having a unit at Burwood and a joint appointment of a Geriatrician and Professor of Medicine, as well as New Zealand's only academic Old Age Psychiatrist of Old Age (part time). There is an active Old Age Academic Unit.

In addition to the clinical care provided to patients, there have been a large number of research publications by the OPHSS Medical Staff both in national and international journals.

OPHSS in Waitaha Canterbury have a very well regarded Advanced Training Programme in Australasia for both Geriatric Medicine and Psychiatry of Old Age. This is in addition to the training of general medical and old age specific issues for Registrars and House Officers who are not Advanced Trainees. These runs provide excellent teaching opportunities in both geriatric and general medicine and there are regular departmental education sessions including RMO teaching sessions, grand rounds, audit meetings, journal clubs and mortality and morbidity meetings. The senior medical staff are consistently acknowledged in providing excellent support to RMOs both within and also out of hours.

Enquiries

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