

Aoife McGarvey flying the flag...

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Aoife McGarvey, physiotherapist at Calvary Mater Newcastle, has recently been flying the flag for physiotherapy research into head and neck cancer. Aoife has undertaken a number of successful research projects and is now being called upon to speak at conferences due to her expertise.

Aoife explains, "I realised that there was a clinical need for improved physiotherapy for head and neck cancer patients as there has previously been no physiotherapy pathways and very limited research in this area."

"In 2009 I was lucky enough to secure the Mater's James Lawrie Research Grant which allowed me to complete the first prospective randomised study in the area; I was keen to research intense physiotherapy after neck cancer dissection surgery," Aoife says.

Commencing in 2010, with a completion date of 2013, patients at Calvary Mater Newcastle, Liverpool and Westmead Hospitals are taking part in this ground breaking research. Aoife is now waiting for the final results in 2013 to introduce education packages amongst physiotherapists nationally and with the aim of improving awareness of what physiotherapists can offer patients.

Aoife is now being called upon to carry out presentations on the topic worldwide. For over the past three years, she has presented at the Australian and New Zealand Head and Cancer Society Scientific meetings, plus also the Australasian College of Surgeons Scientific meeting in Malaysia, she has been the only physiotherapist to ever present at these conferences.

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