

Title:

A Tropical Disaster. Challenges of Service Provision in North Queensland

Abstract:

Access to lymphoedema services has been an identified issue for people living in North Queensland. Lack of specialist lymphoedema services, geographical limitations, poor awareness of the services, treatment and management options available for lymphoedema and retention of trained staff contribute to the chronicity of cases often seen in North Queensland and the challenges of lymphoedema management in this region.

A case presentation will highlight some of the issues surrounding adequate and equitable service provision in the North and pose recommendations for improving access to specialist lymphoedema services and patient care.

With over a 20 year history of untreated chronic, primary right lower limb lymphoedema and history of Downs Syndrome, the case of a 25 year old indigenous male illustrates the challenges of lymphoedema service provision in the North including: delay in referral pathways to specialist lymphoedema services, cultural and gender considerations for indigenous patients and retention of, and access to trained staff for ongoing management.

Lack of dedicated services and staff retention continue to pose significant challenges in the sustainable follow up of patients within rural and remote areas resulting in patients often having to travel significant distances to access services.

Video link consultations and online communities of practice are a useful option to assist in supporting rural and remote therapists through peer support and supervision as well as supporting ongoing skill development and retention of skills with collaborative treatment planning between the primary rural therapist, patient and tertiary treatment facility.

Cultural issues

Lack of access to services

Cognitive issues

Communication

Compliance

How work contributes

Limitations

Future

Key finding