The development of a multimodal approach was required to support the gaps identified in the patients journey following Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) from acute hospitals, post-acute rehabilitation services, disability services and life-long care. This led to the development of the ICP for Spinal Cord Injury. ICP’s can help to reduce unnecessary variations in patient care and outcomes. They support the development of care partnerships and empower patients and their carers.

Project aim: By July 2017 national integrated care pathway for spinal injuries will be developed to address the holistic needs of patients, families and carers

**Method**

- Multi-stakeholder engagement to develop a patient centred pathway
- Review of best practice guidelines in the management of people with SCI
- Review of other applicable policy/strategies
- Baseline measure of existing patient journey
- Development & testing of rehabilitation needs assessment
- Service user survey
- Job descriptions

**Results**

Starting small and growing the seeds of quality improvement methodology has resulted positively in the development and initial implementation of the first nationally agreed Integrated Care Pathway for People with SCI in Ireland.

Patient experience survey suggested the 2 biggest issues they felt need to be addressed were a) support across the continuum of b) improved communication. It is felt that implementation of this pathway will make a significant positive improvement in both of these areas.

**Key Reference Materials;**

- Model of Care, National Clinical Programme for Rehabilitation Medicine (pending);
- Australian Guidelines for levels of attendant care for people with spinal cord injury produced by The Lifetime Care and Support Authority of NSW and the Motor Accidents Authority;


**Achievements**

- 1st standardized assessment of rehabilitation need
- 1st SCI rehabilitation coordinator post working across hospitals
- 1st time patients who are ventilator dependent can access specialist post-acute rehabilitation services in Ireland.
- 1st pathway outlining the continuum of care for people with SCI in Ireland

**Is the pathway proposed in the ICP reflective of the pathway of care you experienced?**

- Yes
- No
- Partially

**Conclusions**

Starting small and growing the seeds of quality improvement methodology has resulted positively in the development and initial implementation of the first nationally agreed Integrated Care Pathway for People with SCI in Ireland.

Patient experience survey suggested the 2 biggest issues they felt need to be addressed were a) support across the continuum of b) improved communication. It is felt that implementation of this pathway will make a significant positive improvement in both of these areas.

**Key Learning Points**

- It is possible for organisations to work across boundaries to support the patient pathway
- To be truly patient centred, a move away from individual service priorities is required with a focus on aligning priorities to support smooth transition through services for the patient.
- Not every positive outcome from a project is demonstrable in a run chart - Qualitative data is equally as powerful
- That change is a process.
- Motivation can be impacted by many factors, both personal and professional
- The difference between ‘complicated’ and ‘complex’ and approaches needed when addressing both
- The need to foster local ‘ownership’ for optimal success
- Acknowledge every positive step
- Culture eats change for breakfast!!

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The development of an Integrated Care Pathway (ICP) to provide optimal person centred care for all patients with a Spinal Cord Injury in Ireland

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