

Forum for OT Australia 24th National Conference, Gold Coast 2011

Title: **The use of electrical stimulation by occupational therapists**

Facilitators: Dr Louise Gustafsson (University of Queensland, QLD)

 Dr Annie McCluskey (The University of Sydney, NSW)

Background: Electrical stimulation is a treatment modality used in stroke rehabilitation to optimise motor recovery of weak or paralysed muscles. ES intervenes at the impairment level, enabling clients to engage in activities such as eating and dressing. The 2010 NHMRC-endorsed national guidelines recommend that ES should be available to Australians with stroke who have specific motor control problems and cannot use their upper limb for daily activities. The guideline recommendations do not state which profession should provide this therapy. There are opposing views within and outside the profession about whether occupational therapists hold the necessary competencies and qualifications to use ES.

Aim: The aim of this forum is to present different perspectives on the use of ES by occupational therapists (15-20 mins for 3-4 min platform presentations; 30 mins for discussion). The forum will *not* provide clinicians with practical skills to use ES. Stakeholders who may be invited include a representative from OT Australia, a registration board member, academics, researchers and clinicians and stroke survivor.

Format: During the 60 minute forum, the following topics will be addressed:

- Rationale and evidence for and against the use of ES as part of occupational therapy intervention
- Professional association, registration board or professional indemnity perspectives on use of ES by occupational therapists in Australia
- Knowledge, skills and competencies required to use ES