

## **Angry young Men: a study of hand injuries resulting from a punch to a wall**

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**Introduction:** During the summer of 2009-10 396 people were admitted to The Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) emergency department with hand injuries. The highest proportion of these injuries were sustained as a result of punching a wall or other inanimate objects.

**Objectives:** As occupational therapists it is important to understand the complexity of this injury: the required treatment, the possible cause and the likelihood of re-occurrence.

The purpose of this study is to reinforce our holistic approach to therapeutic intervention.

**Method:** This study is based on a retrospective review of cases presenting to PAH. Cases sustaining metacarpal fractures as a result of punch injuries were investigated.

Quantitative measures such as the type of intervention, the time to heal and the estimated cost to Queensland health were recorded. In addition the patients demographics, co-morbidities and an explanation of the events precipitating their injuries were explored.

**Results:** The results of this study identified a number of trends within the treatment population. These included age, sex, day of occurrence, substance use and the emotion of anger.

**Conclusion:** In order to better service the hand therapy population it is important to consider more than simply the physical components of the injury.

A number of recommendations are proposed that draw upon our understanding of developmental and environmental factors affecting our patients. This includes utilising existing service/ programs within Queensland Health that lie outside the recognised world of hand therapy.