

## **Occupational Therapy Services for people in rural and remote locations who have sustained a traumatic hand injury**

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**Introduction:** Research highlights that rural and remote residents experience limited access to health care services. Further, there is limited research on the best manner of providing specialist allied health services to rural and remote residents, in particular hand therapy.

**Aim:** This PhD research aims to devise a model of service delivery for occupational therapists in public health care who provide hand therapy to rural and remote residents in Australia.

**Methods:** There are four phases to this study utilising a mixed methods approach. 1. Secondary data analysis of previous surveys with rural/remote and metropolitan populations to compare similarities and differences between the two groups; 2. Qualitative interviews of 15 rural/remote residents to explore the lived experience and impact of a traumatic hand injury on daily life and the rehabilitation service provided; 3. Survey of occupational therapists and/or physiotherapists in public health facilities to investigate perceptions surrounding patient compliance due to limited access to health professionals, the use of technology and ICT for patient care, training in hand injuries and areas for change and development; 4. A randomised controlled trial to determine if DVD technology can enhance compliance with, and understanding of, a home exercise program following a hand injury.

**Results:** Preliminary findings from the above four phases will be presented and a potential service model proposed.

**Conclusion:** This research will address the gap in the literature surrounding the provision of hand therapy services in rural and remote locations and add to the body of knowledge surrounding rural and remote health care.