

Symposiums

S9.1

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy – Lesson Learnt

13:15 Convention Hall C

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy and How to Ensure the Success of Building a New Hyperbaric Oxygen Treatment Centre – The Australian Experience

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Introduction

Hyperbaric oxygen for therapeutic purposes (HBOT) remains a controversial modality. The primary challenge is one of skepticism. In effect hyperbaric physicians must make the case that they know something about how to treat their colleagues' patients that those colleagues cannot deliver. This is a delicate situation for a group of practitioners who "own" a therapy rather than a suite of diseases. This presentation will outline the potential pitfalls when establishing a new service, along with strategies to deal with them.

Potential Pitfalls:

Plant and equipment: The chamber must be fit for purpose. This implies a rectangular treatment area with adequate room for the ingress of an Intensive Care Unit bed and equipment, two pressurised attendants and all the necessary monitoring. There should be room for multiple seated patients for routine therapy and adequate transfer lock area for emergency personnel and equipment. Ideally, at least one monoplace chamber should be available.

Personnel: The team must work closely and co-operatively. The facility will need physicians, nursing staff, clerical staff and technicians for the maintenance and operation of the hyperbaric systems.

Training: This is a highly specialised area of practice. All staff will need appropriate training, including regular updates. Any compressible staff will require monitoring of fitness to work under pressure, including monitoring for chronic effects of compression.

Patient facilities: It is common during planning to underestimate the facilities required for patient comfort as the service expands. Not only adequate changing and toileting facilities, but storage, waiting areas and access can be problematic. Of great importance is a clean and private wound care area.

Education: Both physicians and nurses will need to be articulate, respected and knowledgeable in providing information, encouragement and education to their peers outside the field.

Summary

There are unique challenges in establishing a new HBOT service. The initial investment is considerable and it is rational to invest sufficient time and money as to ensure appropriate use is made of these facilities.