

Cardiac Rehabilitation

The following pages are designed to assist the health professional understand the role and structure of cardiac rehabilitation in New Zealand.

Links to relevant resources are supplied.

The Heart Foundation in conjunction with Te Hotu Maori has developed an alternative to traditional hospital based cardiac rehabilitation group programmes called Heart Guide Aotearoa (HGA).

Background

Who is eligible for cardiac rehabilitation?

Who can benefit from cardiac rehabilitation?

The phases of cardiac rehabilitation

Phase I

Phase II (including the HGA)

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Background

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in New Zealand, accounting for 38% of all deaths annually. Coronary artery disease is the largest contributor to this mortality accounting for approximately one in four of all deaths. Demand for hospital admissions continues to increase and at the same time average length of hospital stay is progressively reducing.

Definition of cardiac rehabilitation

Cardiac rehabilitation is the coordinated sum of interventions required to ensure the best physical, psychological and social conditions so that patients with chronic or post-acute cardiovascular disease may, by their own efforts, preserve or resume optimal functioning in society and, through improved health behaviours, slow or reverse progression of the disease.[1]

Cardiac rehabilitation is designed to meet the particular needs of people who have had a heart event such as a heart attack, acute coronary syndrome, stable/unstable angina, stable heart

failure and those at high risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), as well as individuals who have had heart surgery.

Comprehensive cardiac rehabilitation programmes have been shown to reduce mortality from coronary heart disease, re-infarction rates and hospital admissions and improve quality of life for patients and their families.

The main goals of cardiac rehabilitation are to:

- Prevent further cardiovascular events through initiating and maintaining lifestyle changes
- Improve quality of life through management of psychological distress
- Facilitate the patients' return to a full and active life.

Who can benefit from cardiac rehabilitation?

Cardiac rehabilitation programmes are suitable for individuals who have had a heart event.

Including patients, who are at high risk, have had a heart attack, acute coronary syndrome and have stable/unstable angina. Patients who have had heart surgery including valve surgery as well as angioplasty with or without stents are also eligible.

The phases of cardiac rehabilitation

Phase I - inpatient rehabilitation

Phase I rehabilitation in hospital includes early mobilisation and education helping the patient and their family begin to develop an understanding of heart disease. The scope of phase I is changing rapidly as length of hospital stays decrease.

Phase II - outpatient or community based rehabilitation

Most cardiac rehabilitation is based in Phase II consisting of a supervised programme of six to twelve weeks duration, beginning as soon as possible after referral or discharge from hospital. It usually contains an exercise component combined with an education session and is often delivered by a multidisciplinary team. In New Zealand the Heart Guide Aotearoa has been developed as an alternative home based option.

Phase III - long-term maintenance

This relates to the long-term maintenance of the skills and behaviour change learned within phase II and III. In New Zealand this phase is mainly the domain of independent community "cardiac clubs" which act as support groups. These groups provide a regular programme where lifestyle change is encouraged and supported. Programmes are shaped around exercise, education and emotional/social support. They are run by community members, exercise professionals or health professionals.

Phase I

Phase I cardiac rehabilitation occurs in hospital whilst the patient is recovering from a heart event, is waiting for a diagnosis or preparing for treatment. Information is provided on how to best recover from a heart event. Patients and their family/whanau are given general heart health information, a discharge plan and a referral to a phase II programme.

Phase II

Phase II cardiac rehabilitation programmes usually occur on site at the hospital. Exercise, education and emotional/social support are provided in a series of sessions over a 6-12 week period following hospital discharge.

There has been a longstanding history of low levels of uptake and completion of cardiac rehabilitation particularly within Maori, Pacific and low socioeconomic groups. An audit of cardiac rehabilitation services published in 2004 showed that of the people eligible for rehabilitation according to the New Zealand Guidelines Group (NZGG) criteria; approximately nine percent completed Phase II. The audit also showed that the group most likely to get access to cardiac rehabilitation and complete it were Pakeha/European men aged 55-65 years.

In order to address these poor statistics, the Heart Foundation in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Te Hotu Manawa Maori developed an alternative Phase II programme known as *Heart Guide Aotearoa (HGA)*. Evaluation of HGA showed that a higher completion rate of 88% across all demographic groups within the pilot sites and that the pilot sample had a higher proportion of Maori who also had the highest rates of completion.

Heart Guide Aotearoa

What is Heart Guide Aotearoa?

HGA is a home based cardiac rehabilitation programme designed to increase uptake and completion of cardiac rehabilitation by cardiac patients by offering additional options to existing programmes. The programme is based on a structured programme and set of resources which is delivered by a trained "Heart Coach".

The resource kit contains paper based resources which provide the patient with information and advice in an easily accessible form. Additionally there is a pocket diary which aids goal setting and a relaxation CD and information booklet for partners and family members.

The Heart Coach training includes a two day interactive workshop covering all aspects of heart disease, programmed delivery and cognitive behavioural approaches. This training is supported by a Heart Coach manual which is sent out as pre reading and a Heart Coach CD which contains a variety of educational tools and resources.

Using Heart Guide Aotearoa

The HGA approach to cardiac rehabilitation is flexible enough to be implemented in hospital cardiology departments or as a primary care initiative. Although it has been designed primarily as a home based programme it can be readily adapted to most settings. A trained facilitator can adapt the HGA to most settings and it is equally effective as a standalone programme or as an integral part of a cardiac rehabilitation programme.

Key points:

- The HGA is an individualised menu-based system
- The patients' needs are determined by an initial assessment process which covers medical targets such as lifestyle change and adherence to prescribed medications, with further reviews taking place at agreed intervals
- Addresses patients beliefs about their illness and challenges unhelpful beliefs
- Helps the patient to identify and implement effective coping strategies
- By working with the healthcare team, the patient is helped to identify and change these unhelpful behaviours
- Common psychological reactions to the diagnosis or to an acute event are explained and self management or appropriate referral to expert help is implemented
- The HGA has been shown to reduce unnecessary disability and to improve patients' quality of life
- Research has shown that cardiac rehabilitation can dramatically improve psychological outcomes for patients, and that it also reduces health costs by decreasing the number of unplanned admissions for hospital care.

Training for HGA coaches

Heart Coach training workshops are run over two days. The workshop covers the psychological and clinical background to rehabilitation, delivery of the programme, behavioural interventions to help reduce symptoms, risk factor management, medications and assessment of the progress of patients.

The HGA is not just a set of books with accompanying CD's it is an evidence based system for delivering cardiac rehabilitation, and as such is compulsory in order to facilitate the programme with patients.

The workshop has been specifically designed to meet the requirements of skill, knowledge and competence necessary to facilitate HGA. It also recognises the importance of work experience and the integrated nature of learning and work, therefore most of the activity where/when the HGA is used will be in the place of work.

The two day workshops are delivered by experienced facilitators and Heart Coaches and are run throughout the country at different times of the year. The location and frequency of training varies according to demand and all efforts are made to meet individual needs.

A certificate of attendance is issued to each participant who successfully completes the workshop.

Cost

The two day workshop costs \$400 per person including the cost of meals and training resources for the two days.

Applications and enquiries to Lee Dalton

LeeD@HeartFoundation.org.nz

How to develop a business case for the HGA

Click [here](#) for a guide on how to apply for funding and prepare your case.

Phase III

Cardiac Clubs and Heart Support Groups - What are they?

Community based support groups which provide an important forum for social support, physical activity, education and secondary prevention. There are over 70 cardiac clubs or support groups throughout New Zealand with over 50 of them affiliated to the Heart Foundation. Affiliated groups provide a programme that encourages healthy lifestyle changes through physical activity, education and emotional/social support. They are led by leaders trained with a NZQA Level 3 Certificate and are supported by the Affiliation Team at the Heart Foundation.

Who can join a cardiac club or support group?

Anyone who has a heart condition or is at high risk and their families.

Where are the groups located?

Cardiac Clubs are located throughout the country. For a list of affiliated cardiac clubs and contact details please [click](#) here.

For more information regarding Phase III cardiac clubs, the Affiliation Programme and the role of the Heart Foundation please contact us.

Guidelines and Resources

Patient Resources

The following downloadable resources are also available to order online.

[New Zealand Directory of Cardiac Rehabilitation Programmes](#) [PDF 1.01mb]

This directory published by the Heart Foundation details the phases of cardiac rehabilitation and provides information on how to access cardiac rehabilitation programmes throughout New Zealand.

[Have a Heart - A Guide to Recovery after a Heart Attack](#) [PDF 1.77mb]

This interactive booklet has been written for people who have had a heart attack and for their families. It answers the questions commonly asked both during the hospital stay and following discharge home. It provides practical tips to help people along the road to recovery and to make lifestyle