



Making a Difference!

A single case study

Connie is a breast cancer survivor!

She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1980 and underwent a mastectomy followed by radiation therapy. In 1981 she was treated with chemotherapy for secondaries in the lung.

In 2002 she noticed that she was experiencing altered sensation in the little finger of her right hand and this then progressed to weakness of pinch grip she sought advice from her consultant and the diagnosis of carpal was made and she had her first carpal tunnel release followed by a second release but both operations did not improve her loss of sensation or function. At a 6 week follow-up appointment she was sent for further tests but no definitive diagnosis was made at that time.



The loss of function continued until she had lost finger flexion, thumb flexion, abduction and opposition, wrist flexion, forearm pronation and elbow flexion with muscle wasting at the shoulder too. She is unable to recall in what order function was lost but she has had to adapt to becoming one handed (left handed – her non dominant side). Presenting with an arm that extends behind her with her wrist hyperextended. In 2007 a

diagnosis of radiation burn was made and she was told that this was the late effect of the radiation therapy she had received and that there was nothing that could be done.

In about 2009 her daughter was reading a newspaper article that was talking about the work of RAGE (Radiotherapy Action Group Exposure produce a quarterly newsletter). Connie contacted the group and found out about the Breast Radiotherapy Injury Rehabilitation Clinic that was being piloted in Bath at the Royal National Hospital For Rheumatic Diseases.

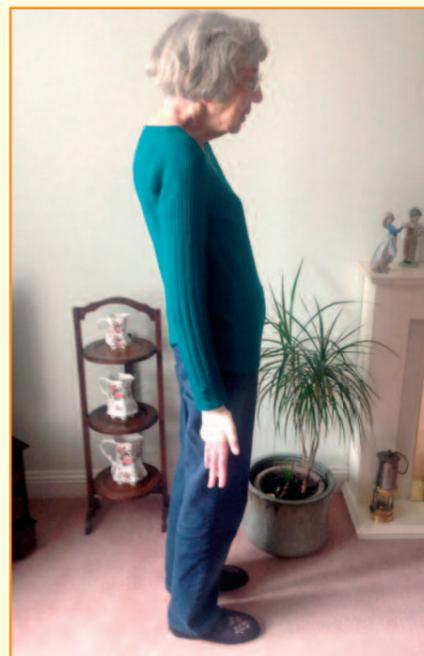


She was referred to the clinic in Bath in September 2012 where she was assessed and treated by the MDT where they attempted to address her loss of function and altered appearance and control of her right upper limb. She was provided with advice and intervention; a splint was fitted to reduce the hyperextension at the wrist but they were unable to address the external rotation of the upper limb.



The therapy team then called the therapy specialist from Jobskin Ltd to see if the Sensory Dynamic Orthosis could be used to address the stability and positioning of Connie's right upper limb. Following assessment using a ProTEM sleeve and kinesiotape she was measured and fitted with a sleeve attached to a gauntlet and the results were positive.

It is important to share Connie's experience with you because it is a quality of life issue where the team at the Breast Radiotherapy Injury Rehabilitation Clinic has been able to address the challenge by accessing interventions that may not have been considered in the past. Connie's right upper limb is now internally rotated to midline bringing the whole upper limb back into alignment with her body as well as controlling the hyperextension at the wrist. She can now also place her right hand (palm side down) on her knee without having to hold it there, something she has not been able to do for a very long time!



This clinic was officially opened in December 2012. More clinics are planned in Bath, Manchester and London.



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