

Herbert Bower Unit

Mission Statement

Our unit is a specialist centre of excellence in the assessment and management for patients' aged 65 and over who require treatment for a mental health problem.

We are committed to providing a multidisciplinary approach to patient care in a sensitive, caring and safe environment. The unit adopts a best practice approach in healthcare and offers individual and group program delivered by highly trained clinicians who are experts in the delivery of care to this age group. We also acknowledge the central role of families and carers in developing appropriate care plans.

About the program

The Herbert Bower Unit aims to provide services to people who have a mental illness in later life. This is offered within a context of understanding the interactions between the psychological, physiological and social effects of the aging process. A range of strategies have been developed to ensure a very high level of care and include the following:

- A Clinical Director who leads the unit and a team of consultant psychiatrists who specialise in Older Persons' Psychiatry.
- A senior psychiatric registrar is an integral part of the assessment, treatment and discharge of patients. Additionally we have a visiting geriatrician to manage ongoing medical issues.
- There are structured group activities conducted by team members with the aim of enhancing treatment outcomes.
- Discharge planning is an integral part of patient management. This includes regular family/carer conferences.
- An Outreach Service is available to assist in ongoing management of the patient following discharge.

A multidisciplinary approach

There is a multidisciplinary team including nurses, an occupational therapist, a social worker, a neuro-psychologist and a physiotherapist. Access to a clinical psychologist is also available.

The multidisciplinary approach of the program is particularly important in this age group. The clinical expertise of various health professionals results in optimal patient management and combines to provide the basis for appropriate interventions. For example, the input of the occupational therapist includes assessment and therapy for everyday functioning; the psychosocial focus of social work in the form of community support and resources. It is this that helps position us at the forefront of best practice in the area of Older Person's Psychiatry.

General medical practitioners assess each patient's physical condition and visiting geriatricians or other physicians will be available for consultation when required. The psychiatrist-led multidisciplinary team will review all patients once a week. This will allow for a comprehensive Patient Care Plan to be formulated, communication between the team, the treating psychiatrist and patient will ensure a formulation of a discharge plan.

Admission Criteria

65 years of age and over with a diagnosis of a mental illness.

Admission

Admissions can be arranged by contacting an Intake Clinician on (03) 9420 9340.

Referral

General Practitioners may refer patients directly to one of our accredited psychiatrists, or contact our Intake Clinicians on (03) 9420 9340 for assistance with arranging either an outpatient appointment or an inpatient admission. Referrals may be faxed to (03) 9420 9351.