**Elderly NOF patient – a surgery journey through ISLHD**

Patient MRN XXXXXX is an 85 year old male. He presented to Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital this Monday, 27 August with an X-ray showing a right NOF fracture.

He was transferred to Wollongong Hospital the same day and told he was receiving surgery later that afternoon.

He was fasted in preparation for his surgery.

On Wednesday afternoon he was still waiting for his surgery – lying in Bed 1 in Ward B4 West in a shared room. He has fasted twice more in preparation for postponed surgeries, has had little sleep for nights, and has had a catheter inserted so he can remain in bed due to his pain when mobilizing.

These are the details of the case of patient MRN XXXXXX. But there is more to this story…

**4 weeks in agony**

Mr FJ is an elderly man who has been stoically walking around with excruciating hip pain for four weeks. He isn’t sure exactly when he broke his hip – three weeks ago he experienced a searing pain in his hip and thigh after getting out of his tractor.

The pain remained with him, and he endured it with no pain relief. A week later he tripped on a tile at the Post Office and landed heavily on his knee. The pain worsened, and he visited his GP who suggested three Panadeine Fort and rest. “I only took one though, because I wanted to know when the pain was gone,” he said.

Another week and the pain grew steadily worse. He decided to go to a Physiotherapist, who referred him for an X-ray. His hip fracture was finally discovered – after 4 weeks of excruciating pain – and he was told to go straight to Shoalhaven Hospital Emergency Department.

Unfortunately, three days later he is still lying in pain in his bed in B4 West at Wollongong Hospital, awaiting a surgery that seemingly never comes. Each day he has expected his surgery, and each day it hasn’t happened. When asked how he feels about it, he says, “They are very busy – there are many other people that need important surgery. And doctors can only work for eight hours.”

Mr FJ may be understanding, but is it right that this experience is **affecting every area of his life** so negatively? And for such **a prolonged period of time**?

**Limited nourishment**

His food has ranged widely from full fasting to light diet. He’s not quite sure when (or if) his next meal will come. When asked “You must be hungry?”, he responds with, “I had a lovely sandwich last night.” It’s now mid-afternoon. “That’s ok, I can be hungry,” he says.

**Lack of emotional support**

Has he had visitors? He lights up when he thinks about his family. “I have three beautiful sons, and they have children with children now. I have 10 beautiful great-grandchildren.” His wife died a couple of years ago, so there is no one able to be by his side. “A few of my family have been in, but I have told them to stay away, as I don’t know what is happening with my surgery. I don’t want them to come in and then not be here to see them.”

**Sleep deprivation**

So Mr FJ lies alone in a shared room with other elderly men. The room is busy and noisy with the comings and goings of visitors for the other men, as well as medical staff. “How have you been sleeping?” To this he shrugs, “it’s ok, this is how it has to be at the moment,” he replies.

**Trauma**

Mr FJ declined having his photo taken.

“I am not at my best,” he said. “I don’t want to be remembered like this. I just want to get through my surgery, go home, and get back to normal. Then I will start taking photos again.”

This is not Mr FJ’s first time in hospital. Years ago he damaged a tendon in his leg after lifting a heavy beehive. He recalls the excruciating pain, “I couldn’t move at all,” he said. A few years ago he lost two of his fingers chopping firewood. He likens this trauma of breaking his hip with those ordeals. This experience is something he will no doubt remember for the rest of his life.

Mr FJ endured hardship, pain and deprivation growing up that most of us can’t even imagine. He was born during the 2nd World War. His father died when he was 11 in a bomb strike near the end of the conflict. Despite being the youngest in the family, Mr FJ became the “man of the family” and looked after and defended his mother and siblings.

This is probably what has made him the stoic, quiet, unassuming, and kind man he is today.

When asked how he feels about his hospital experience so far, he said, “**I am just happy and lucky to be alive**. This is what life is sometimes, and we just have to get on with it.”

**This is Patient MRN XXXXXX surgery journey experience in our District.**

**Does it really have to be like this?**