
Plenary: New Wheelchair Technology – Evaluating its effectiveness

Bonita Sawatzky, PhD

Session description:

As new technologies are being developed for the general population we are increasingly adopting ideas from these initiatives into the wheelchair world. We are quick adopters of new technology, but are new ideas good at what they say they might do? This presentation will explore the various innovations that have developed over the past decade and how measuring the impact of their effectiveness might prove to be more challenging than first meets the eye. How do we define whether a product is effective at making it easier to use a manual wheelchair, for example? What criteria do you use to determine "easier"? Dr Sawatzky will present some of research methods used to answer and sometimes not answer some of these questions. Understanding the limitations of various methodologies are important when using literature to justify costs for certain equipment requests.

Speaker biography:

Researcher and medical educator, Bonita (Bonnie) Sawatzky is passionate about all things wheeled and making research practical. An Associate Professor in Orthopaedics at the University of British Columbia and a Principal Investigator at ICORD (International Collaboration on Repair Discoveries), she focuses on the measurable physiological and biomechanical effects of wheelchair propulsion and explores new innovations which may help to decrease pain, fatigue and long-term overuse injuries in adults and children. She also helps to bring together therapists, engineers, students and physicians from around the world to present ideas, innovations and research to improve mobility at the Vancouver International Seating Symposium.