



About the medical professionals

There are many professionals who may form part of the medical team.

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Medical specialists

Medical specialists are involved in a patient's care depending on the type and extent of the injuries. Some specialists you may encounter include:

Intensive care physician: a doctor who specialises in the management of patients who require the complex support available in an intensive care unit.

Registrar: a senior doctor who directs the hospital unit team and patient management. The registrar may also assist the specialist/consultant in caring for the patient.

Visiting Medical Officer: a visiting medical officer is a senior doctor subcontracted by the hospital to provide oversight and mentorship for registrars and residents. This role may also be called a VMO or consultant.

Neurosurgeon: a surgeon who is a specialist in the management of disorders of the nervous system, brain and spine.

Neurologist: a medical specialist who has a high level of expertise in diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the brain, brain stem and cranial nerves.

Neuropsychologist: a psychologist who is trained in understanding how the brain works and how it affects behaviour, memory, learning and personality.

Occupational therapist: a therapist who has the expertise to improve or maintain independent functioning in all aspects of daily living.

Physiotherapist: a therapist who deals with the physical problems caused by the brain injury in order to maximise physical functioning.

Other hospital staff

As well as the above medical specialists, there are many professionals who may form part of the medical team for treating a stroke, traumatic brain injury and other brain disorders.

Below are brief explanations of those likely to be involved in acquired brain injury situations.

Nursing team: specific nurses are usually assigned to a patient and are responsible for the immediate care of the patient. A more senior member of the nursing staff usually coordinates the overall management of the ward including patient care, staff and support services

Resident: a junior doctor who will rotate through all the specialist areas of a hospital in order to gain experience and skills unique to these areas.



Medical director: a senior doctor responsible for a department or unit.

Ward Consultant: a doctor who is assigned to a particular ward to oversee the care of patients in the ward.

Orthotist: a specialist technician who develops and fits mechanical devices such as a brace, splint or body jacket.

Speech language pathologist: a specialist who assesses and treats communication and swallowing difficulties. Sometimes there may be damage to the voice and articulation mechanisms, such as the breathing, tongue and facial muscles.

Social worker: a social worker provides a wide range of social services including support, information, referral and counselling to patients and families.

Other professionals who may be involved in monitoring a person's condition or providing care at different stages of recovery include a dietician, ear nose and throat (ENT) specialist, ophthalmologist, psychiatrist, radiologist, recreational therapist and rehabilitation coordinator.