

# A seat at the table

Using asepsis principles to facilitate a wheelchair-using medical student to gain surgical operating theatre experience

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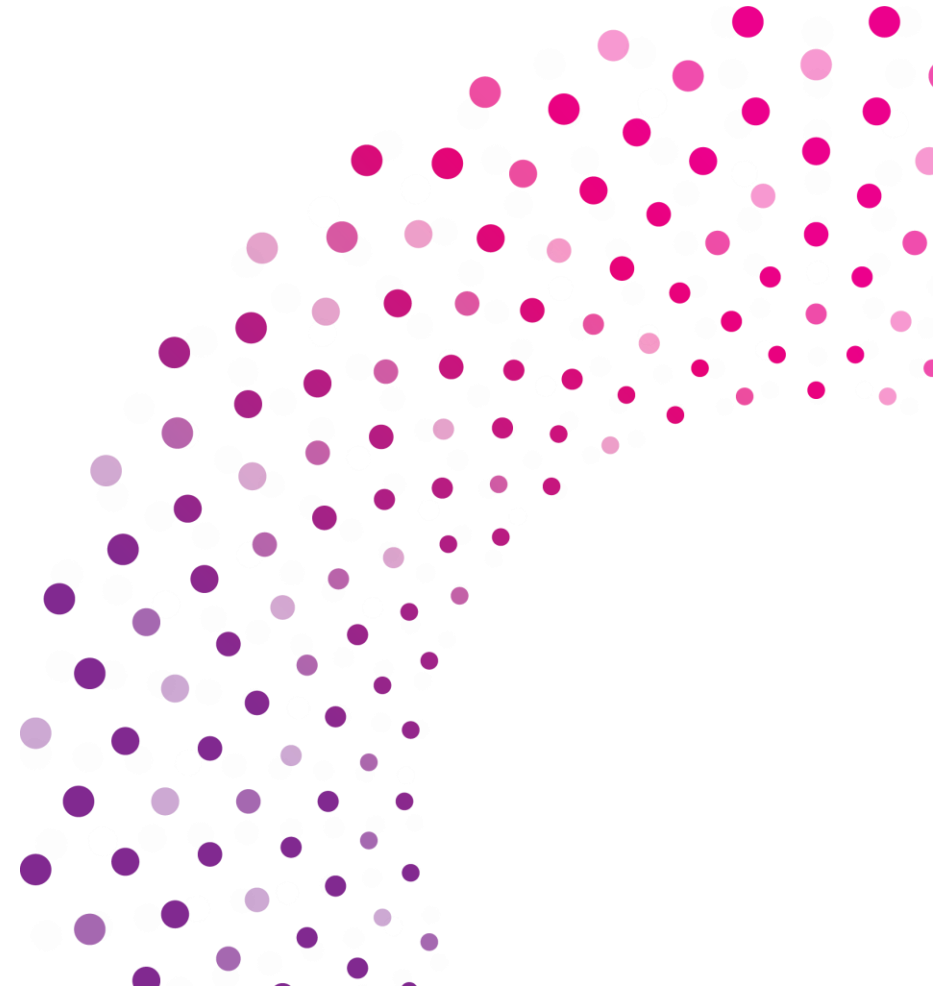
**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024



the women's  
the royal women's hospital

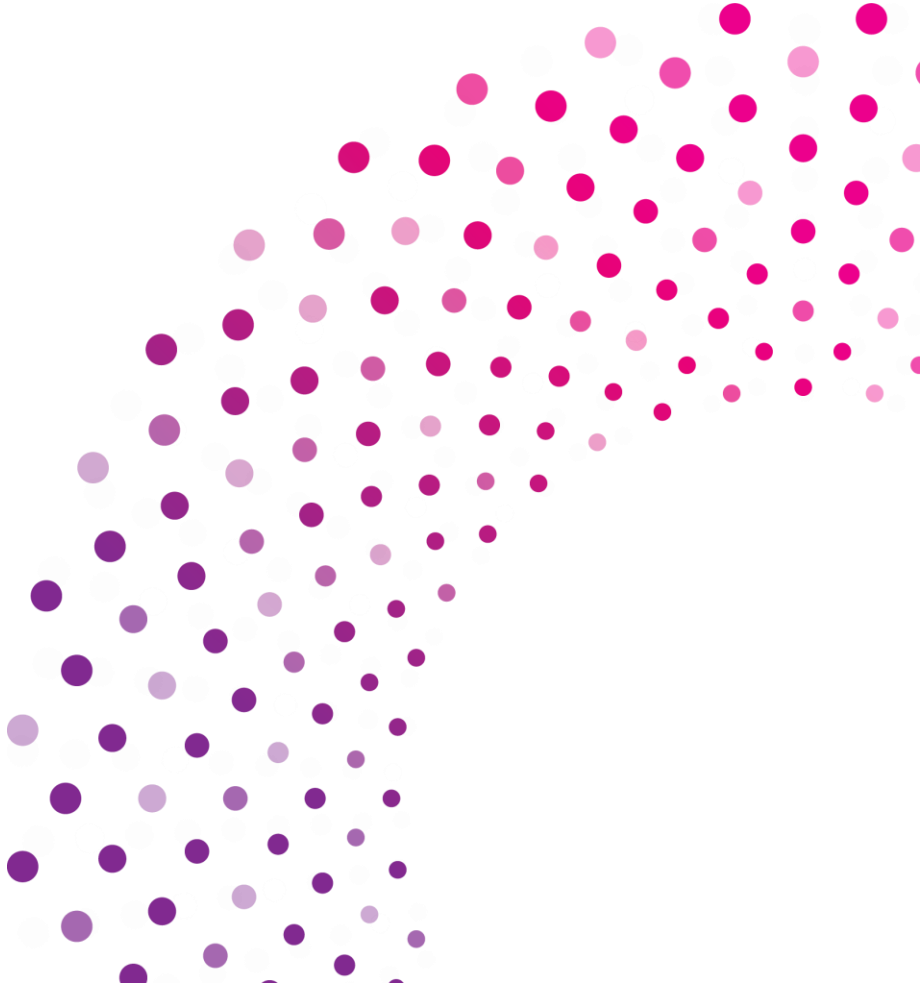
# Acknowledgement of Country

On lands of the  
Kulin nation



# Conflict of Interest

**None to declare**



# Team recognition

**Medical Student**

**Medical Student Coordinator**

**Theatre leadership team**

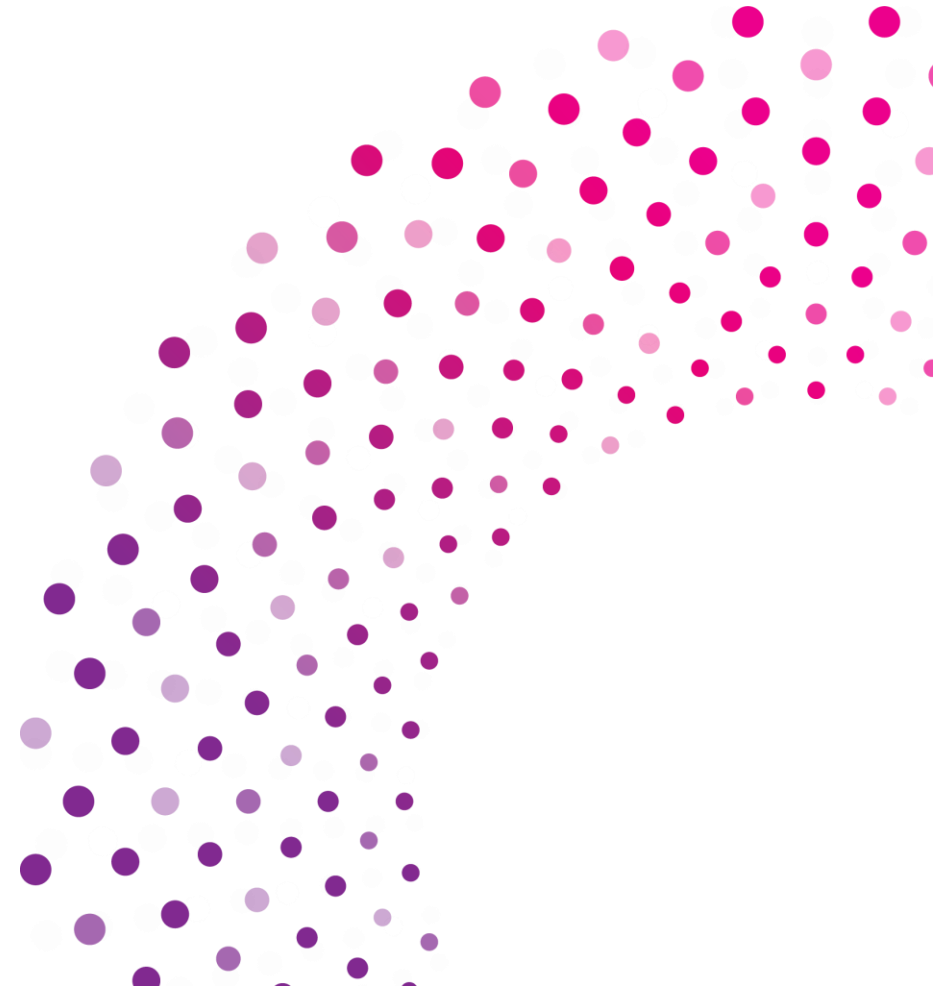
**Surgical team**

**Workplace Health and Safety**

**Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging**

**Infectious Diseases team**

**Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)**



# Outline

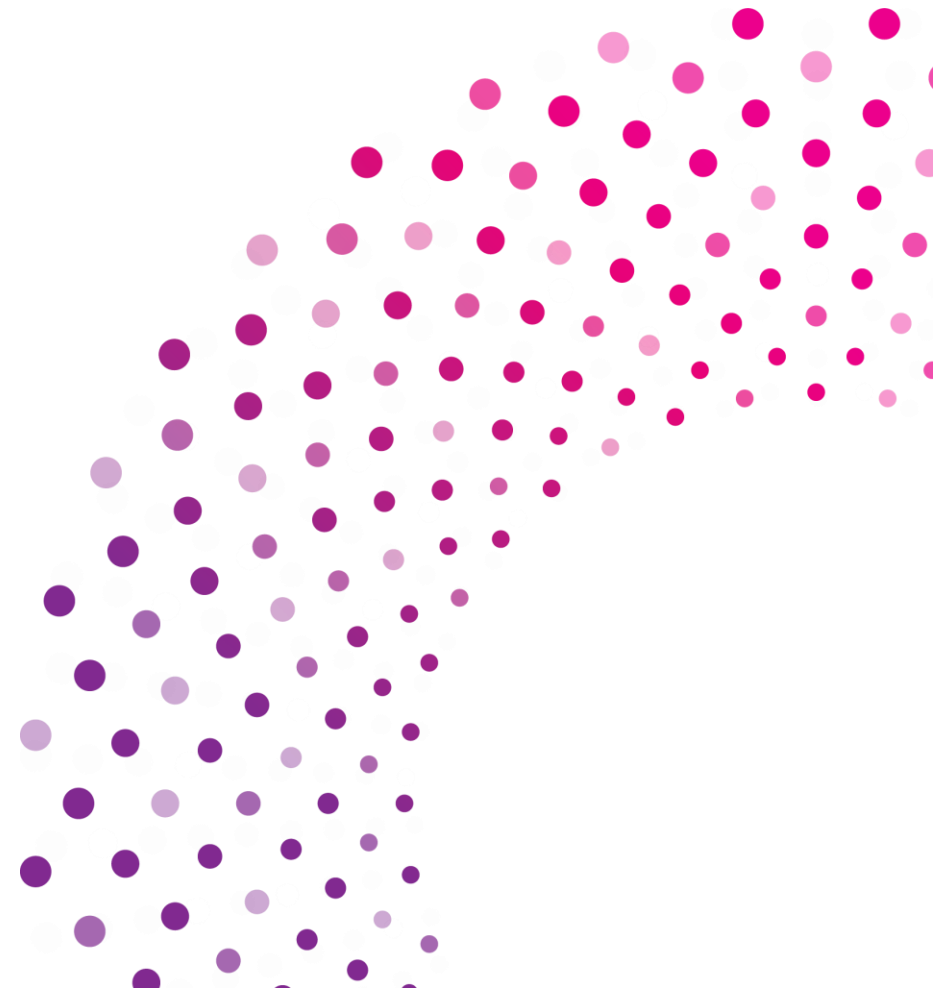
**Background**

**Proposal**

**Method**

**Results**

**Conclusions**



# Background

The Royal Women's Hospital - Melbourne

Specialist maternal; neonatal and women's health

Research facility

Public teaching hospital

200 beds

64 bed NICU

7,500 births per annum



# Context

## Women's Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging

The Women's is dedicated to fostering a workplace culture where diversity and inclusion are valued...Such a culture exists when Women's staff, volunteers, students and associated parties feel valued and respected and have equal opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways through their work.

## Legal

*Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)*

*Victorian Equal Opportunities Act (2010)*

# Proposal

**May 2024**

Contacted by Medical Education Student Coordinator

3<sup>rd</sup> year Medical Student with keen interest in surgery

No surgical experience unlike other 3<sup>rd</sup> year students

Opportunity offered by the Women's contingent on team agreement

***“Could the IPC team facilitate perioperative experience for a medical student who uses a wheelchair?”***

# Priorities

Patient safety

Maintenance of asepsis

Student support and safety

Workforce knowledge

Communication

## Aseptic Technique Procedure



### Key Points

- Aseptic technique aims to protect patients from infection during invasive clinical procedures by minimising the risk of introducing pathogenic microorganisms
- Ineffective aseptic technique leads to healthcare-associated infections
- Hand hygiene at the correct time is a crucial component of aseptic technique to prevent introduction of microorganisms during procedures

### 1. Purpose

This procedure outlines the requirements for aseptic technique at the Women's with the aim of protecting patients from healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) by:

- a. Providing the knowledge for how to perform aseptic technique correctly
- b. Identifying the procedures where aseptic technique applies
- c. Providing a method to assess aseptic technique skills and competency
- d. Providing a framework for monitoring compliance with aseptic technique at The Women's

This procedure is related to:

[Infection Prevention and Control - Framework](#)

[Hand Hygiene - Guideline](#)

[Infection Prevention: Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions - Guideline](#)

# Barriers and enablers

## Barriers

First time experience  
Biases and knowledge deficits  
Limited time to prepare  
Need for interdisciplinary input  
Level of student's skills training  
Inaccessible facilities  
Student v employee

## Enablers

Student co-ordinator proactive  
Surgical team engaged



# Literature review

Two accounts of clinicians returning to perioperative space following paraplegia

## **Common challenges**

Inaccessible facilities

Additional assistance required – donning, draping, positioning

Communication

# Available guidelines

## International/jurisdictional guidelines

None focussed on wheelchair-assisted surgical team members

## Australian College of Operating Room Nurses (ACORN) Standards

Perioperative attire

Asepsis

Surgical hand antisepsis, gowning, and gloving

Cleaning and maintaining the perioperative environment

# Collaboration and agreement

**Operating Theatre and Surgical team**

**Infectious Diseases team**

**Workplace Health and Safety**

- Personal evacuation plan as part of student's orientation

**Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging**

- Advised to inform all theatre staff of plan
- Ensure student assigned a dedicated support staff



# Consultation with ACORN



## Recommendations

Cleaning wheelchair

Suitable surgical case selection – seated

Emphasis on perioperative attire

Ensure PPE worn

Surgical hand antisepsis

Gowning and gloving

Draping



# Development of work instruction

## By IPC

Roles and responsibilities

Perioperative attire (protective shoes)

Location to change clothing

Wheelchair cleaning

Surgical scrubbing and draping

Moving into surgical position

When not scrubbed (face protection)

## Work instruction for wheelchair-assisted personnel in the peri-operative environment



### Key Points

- Surgical aseptic technique must be maintained in the peri-operative environment
- With support and planning wheelchair-assisted personal can safely perform in the peri-operative environment

### 1. Purpose

This procedure outlines the requirements to provide a patient care environment and workplace where wheelchair-assisted personnel attend in the peri-operative environment at the Women's.

This procedure is related to the following documents:

[Aseptic Technique Procedure](#)

[Dress Code for Perioperative Attire - Procedure](#)

[Hand Hygiene - Guideline](#)

[Infection Prevention Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions Guideline](#)

[Sharps Management in the Operating Suite Procedure](#)

[Surgical Scrub - Procedure](#)

# Additional recommendations

**Surgical scrub training for the student**

**Conduct a simulation**

Donning perioperative attire (scrubs)

Donning and draping of wheelchair

Manoeuvrability of wheelchair after draping

Access to manual wheelchair brakes



# Reports from the team

**No adverse patient outcomes**

**No adverse team outcomes**

**Val has shared her experiences  
with Doctors with Disabilities**

**Val will have first-hand  
experience to share**



# Retrospective simulation with IPC

## Surgical scrubbing training

Student had not experienced same training as other students

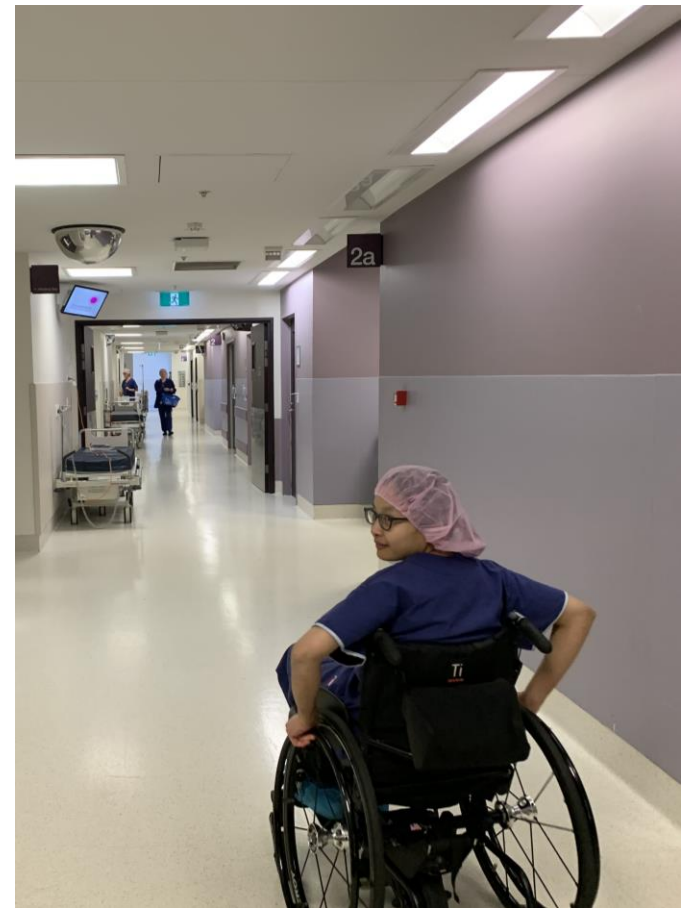
Online learning – repeated before perioperative experience

Coached/supervised on the day by Medical Student Coordinator

## Choice of procedure important

Back of wheelchair not covered easily

# Results



# Results



# Results



# Results



# Results



# Results



# Learning outcomes

## We have

A work plan

A strategy for wheelchair-assisted birth partners

## Beyond

ACORN to consider strategies for wheelchair-assisted surgical team members in their standards review



# For future improvements

## **ASK**

The right questions from the right people.

Admit to what you know and what you don't know.

## **ADVOCATE**

For accessibility

Changing facilities and sink access

## **ACT**

Don't be put off, as long as it can be done safely

# Conclusions

Wheelchair-assisted team members can work safely in operating rooms  
IPC can support a sustainable workforce.

Thank you Val!



# References

1. Aikele N, Burkett J, Conner J. A guide for accommodating wheelchairs in the OR while maintaining safety and quality. *Am J Infect Control*. 2021 Jan;49(1):75-76. doi: 10.1016/j.ajic.2020.05.028. Epub 2020 May 30. PMID: 32485275.
2. Australian College for Perioperative Nurses (ACORN). 2023 Standards for safe and quality care in the perioperative environment (SSQCPE) for organisations. Adelaide: ACORN; (3) 2023. 302 p.
3. Australian College of Operating Room Nurses (ACORN). Standards for perioperative nursing in Australia. 16<sup>th</sup> Edition. Australia. ACORN; 2020.
4. Khan, A. (2016), Operating from a wheelchair. *Trends Urology & Men Health*, 7: 25-27. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tre.513>

# Thankyou

[thewomens.org.au](http://thewomens.org.au)

**For more information, contact:**

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