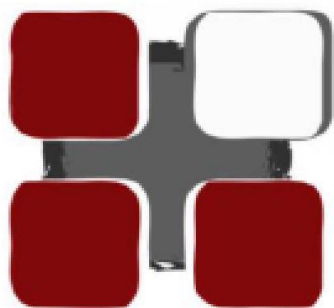


**Next Generation**  
Occupational Medicine



**Next Generation**  
Specialist Support

# Occupational Physicians:

What you wanted to know but didn't want to ask.

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# Overview

- ▶ Who we are/n't
- ▶ Services that can be provided
  - ▶ Difference between Treating Dr and Independent
- ▶ Common Pitfalls/Frustrations
- ▶ Recommendations
- ▶ Questions

# Who/What we are/n't

- ▶ We are not occupational therapists
- ▶ Medical degree and post graduate training
- ▶ Specialist faculty of the RACP
- ▶ Often a second specialty

# Occupational Physician Services

- ▶ Highly varied between practitioners
  - ▶ 'Company Doctor'
  - ▶ Corporate group
  - ▶ Referral-based treating
  - ▶ IME/PI

# What do I want?

- ▶ Biggest and most important question.
- ▶ If you don't know you probably won't get it.

# Treating Dr referrals

- ▶ Time
- ▶ Knowledge of workplaces
  - ▶ Past experience and site visits.
- ▶ Usually better at 'hard' conversations.
- ▶ Used to negotiation, organisation and practical skills in RTW.
- ▶ Wide range of medical experience

# Treating vs Independent opinion

- ▶ A treating Dr is not independent.
- ▶ TD has probably spent a lot more time with the IW and likely has a better appreciation of them and their condition... but
  - ▶ Has to maintain a working relationship
  - ▶ May believe the quickest way to get treatment is to have an active claim
  - ▶ Are usually not used to 'tough love', which may well be needed

# Independent Medical Examinations

- ▶ Fresh eyes
  - ▶ Compensability but also diagnostic, treatment recommendations
- ▶ Objectivity
- ▶ Medicolegal opinions (ie ones that may go to court) have clearly defined areas of expertise

# Short summary

- ▶ Don't ask treating Drs for an IME-type opinion
  - ▶ TD report are very valuable for guidance about treatment plans, prognosis, barriers, recommendations etc but you'll almost always get a response saying it is a compensable condition.
- ▶ IMEs are not likely to be able to provide a medicolegal opinion on all of the conditions dealt with as treating doctors.
- ▶ If wanting something in-between – fresh eyes, treatment-focussed independent opinion but not needing comment on causality/liability, consider Second Opinion Medicine Review.

# Common frustrations (probably)

## Treating Dr

- ▶ Lack of certification
- ▶ Lack of rapid progress

## IME

- ▶ “I asked for % attribution”
- ▶ “You didn’t answer my implied question”
- ▶ “We gave you a statement from the co-worker/supervisor etc that said it was all made up... why did you ignore that?”

# Referral RFI – Treating Dr

## **Treating**

- ▶ Waiting too long to refer
- ▶ Marginalising the treating GP
- ▶ Case discussions

# Referral RFI - IME

## IME

- ▶ Still waiting on info: can you please delay the report?
- ▶ Contact treating Dr
- ▶ Asking about work-relatedness in an already accepted claim

# Questions