

I have no health qualification but have now had three family friends who have had young adult children with severe brain injuries. Please see the email I copied and pasted at the end of this page. It contains some confidential information which I've marked. It was an email I sent yesterday to a Professor while I was attempting to find suitable accommodation for a friend's son.

Submission

There is a need for residential care for young adults with physical disabilities and brain injuries. It is unacceptable that in Australia such a facility only exists in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast. I believe \$250 million was set aside for all states in Australia over a period of 5 years for this purpose- this amount could not even come close to the costs of the initial set up and installation of a successful, or even basic, program.

Currently young adults are housed in aged care facilities, with very little physio and absolutely no intellectual stimulation. If these young people fight the battle to survive they need an incentive to work towards, and a lifetime in an aged care facility is enough to convince many of them that suicide is a better option. The other alternative at present is for the person to return home where they are cared for by their parents and their rehabilitation programme relies on volunteers. This is an unacceptable situation and one that does no credit to Australia

Units for young adults could be modelled on the many residential housing facilities which currently exist for the elderly. These units should be purpose built and designed in a similar fashion to the many aged care facilities that already exist in the community. However unlike the care of the elderly the wonderful thing about these facilities is the hope they could offer and the incredibly positive changes they could make to these young people's lives.

Such facilities should also offer extensive and intensive rehabilitation programmes for the people in them- remember these people are often at the beginning of their lives and with the increasing research in brain plasticity the results can be dramatic. The therapy session area and the living area for the residents should be separate so there are no distractions to their therapy. It is hard work, and patients would need as little distraction and as much encouragement as possible.

I think it's possible that many of these patients, that are basically left in aged care facilities, with basically the bare minimum of physiotherapy, could make greater recoveries than we ever believe possible. They just need the opportunity for daily intensive therapy. They also need the stimulation of young minds around them, of people who have the same frustrations and fears- this would help in alleviating their depression and pessimistic outlook.