

Case Study for the Omega Chair

When Tony started to stumble, occasionally lose balance and show an increase in general clumsiness, his mother Christine was saddened but not surprised; 18 years before her husband Bill had died from Huntingtons Disease. His final years were spent in a Victorian institution, not without care, but bleak and lacking in love and dignity.

For Tony, she resolved, things would be different and home is where he would be until the end. With days increasingly spent propped on sofas the incidence of bruising and injury increased whether in wheelchair, bed, or in other positions that taxed the ability to improvise comfort.

A friend, working in a local special school, commented on the effectiveness of the Kirton Omega chairs for two students with athetoid CP which like HD presented similar demands on postural management and a similar degree of involuntary movement.

It would be wrong if not impossible to make claims that the arrival of the chair led to improvement in the condition or delayed its progress. But Tony slept better, was able to maintain a stable mid line posture (especially as his balance and self righting reflexes worsened), his involuntary movements decreased and discomfort and injuries reduced. Dynamic adjustment in the chair made feeding more pleasurable for them both and swallowing and digestion improved.

For Christine the stress and burden of care became less harsh and increasingly inflected with small pleasures as the anxiety, sadness and distress lost their dominance.

The high support offered by both Omega and Stirling chairs lend themselves to both conditions outlined above: the Omega especially is notable for the ease of its adjustments and its rugged durability.

HD as a condition has risen in awareness and prominence: because of this and more acute diagnoses, its incidence is reckoned to be approx, 8 per 100,000 or just under 5000 in the UK. Life expectancy is extending.

The above figures probably apply to those with athetoid CP who present similar conditions.

A third group who benefit for similar reasons are a small proportion of those with Alzheimers Disease, those who may become self injurious, disturbed, half lost balance and self righting reflexes and are otherwise lack physical security and are prone to injury.

They are probably between 2-4% of those with the condition, approx 15 - 30,000