



Media Release

Wellington Street, Perth Western Australia 6000
Tel: (08) 9224 3943 Fax: (08) 9224 3447
E-mail: jane.ewers-verge@health.wa.gov.au

29-03-06

MEDIA RELEASE

Teenagers' Trauma P.A.R.T.Y. Program

In an Australian first, Royal Perth Hospital is bringing high school students onto its wards to teach them the consequences of road trauma.

This is the first time an Australian trauma Hospital has invited teenagers inside as part of a structured program to teach them about the aftermath of road trauma.

The PARTY (Prevent Alcohol & Risk related Trauma in Youth) program is licensed from a successful Canadian program, and involves taking teenagers through the hospital system, following the path of patients with major trauma from the Emergency Department to a rehabilitation ward.

The aim is to evaluate and improve students' attitudes towards risk-taking behaviour, and to empower them to make informed choices.

The students are shown real road crash scenarios and are taught about the effects of a road crash on the body. They then visit the Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit, as well as patients in the orthopaedic trauma ward, Spinal Unit and the head injury rehabilitation ward at Shenton Park Campus.

They are invited to ask patients questions about their accident and their life since the accident.

The students eat their lunch wearing neck braces and splints, to experience just a few moments of disability.

Royal Perth Hospital Head of Trauma Services Dr Sudhakar Rao said the students were presented with the grim reality of serious injury.

"We want teenagers to see that not all injuries are reversible," he said.

“This kind of injury can be permanent and disability is often life-long – it can all happen in a matter of seconds and that is why planning is so important.”

Dr Rao said he wanted teenagers to plan to avoid risky behaviour.

“Before you even get your drivers licence, before you get into a car, you should plan how you are going to avoid getting into risky situations,” he said.

Dr Rao said data from RPH’s annual Trauma Report showed that 35 per cent of vehicle-related trauma presentations were people in the 15-24 year age group.

“This is a statistic we would like to change over the next few years,” he said.

Research showed that teenagers who participated in the Canadian program were 75 per cent less likely to be involved in alcohol offences and 50 per cent less likely to be involved in seatbelt offences.

Perth schools are supporting the PARTY program and have already booked every week of this school year; school holidays are booked for teenagers from the juvenile justice system.