

Thoracic spine pain and dysfunction: precision in examination, management and rehabilitation – Hong Kong 2026

Facilitator



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Background

The thoracic spine has for a long time been the 'Cinderella' region of the spine; with less research and clinical focus directed to this region compared with the cervical and lumbar spine. Additionally, there continues to be a limited understanding of the aetiology and epidemiology of a range of musculoskeletal presentations, which have a biomechanical or neurophysiological connection to the thoracic spine. Through a programme of research (systematic reviews, surveys, observational studies, reliability and validity studies *etc.*) there is now a greater understanding of thoracic spine dysfunction, practice and management approaches, with novel approaches to transform the rehabilitation practices used for patients presenting with thoracic spine pain and/or dysfunction.

Objectives

This course, with a strong emphasis on integration of theory into practice, will critically evaluate evidence for the under-explored functional kinematics, primary or secondary pain sites, and asymptomatic dysfunction of the thoracic spine contributing to pain complaints in the shoulder region and adjacent spinal regions. A secondary objective is to explore the emerging interest in this spinal region with respect to best practice guidelines and evidence supporting passive and active interventions targeting the thoracic spine dysfunction when managing upper quadrant presentations; specifically an outcome focused (mobility, motor control, work capacity and strength) clinical reasoning framework for thoracic spine exercise prescription in rehabilitation. This course will offer best current evidence within a biopsychosocial framework.

Structure

This two-day course is structured to include the following

- 1. Thoracic pain, function & dysfunction – what do we know?**
- 2. Advanced examination and management of the thoracic spine**
- 3. Rehabilitation of thoracic spine – a clinical reasoning framework informing exercise prescription**
- 4. Evidence into practice using case studies**

A comprehensive supporting handbook will be available to all delegates which will include power point slides as well as text which takes delegate to primary sources and resources to support post course review and further professional development in this field.

Course programme

Start 9.00, break 10.30, lunch 12.00, break 15.00, finish 17.00

DAY 1 Start 9.00	
	Thoracic pain, function & dysfunction – what do we know?
9.00-9.45	Objectives - To explore advanced clinical reasoning & differentiation of primary pain complaints in the thoracic spine
9.45-10.30	- To critically consider the role of the thoracic spine in upper quadrant presentations
10.50-12.00	- To explore evidence of dysfunction, adaptive changes and changes across the lifespan
	Practical Observation during arm elevation, looking over shoulder, walking and throwing, Influence of posture on functional movement
	Advanced examination of the thoracic spine
13.00-14.00	Objectives - To demonstrate critical application of spinal kinematics in the assessment of the thoracic spine
14.00-15.00	- To demonstrate precision in manual assessment of dysfunction in the thoracic spine
15.20-17.00	- To critically explore active movement testing in the thoracic spine with respect to validity and reliability
	Practical Dynamic palpation, active and passive motion evaluation to inform management
	DAY 2
	Advanced management of the thoracic spine
9.00-10.30 10.50-12.00	Objectives - To demonstrate precision in the management of the thoracic spine dysfunction
	Practical Mobilisation, manipulation, MET, Mulligan techniques
	Rehabilitation of thoracic spine – a clinical reasoning framework informing exercise prescription
13.00-13.30	Objectives - To critically evaluate functional movement requirements in the thoracic spine
13.30-14.00	- To demonstrate advanced clinical reasoning in exercise prescription using the ICF framework
14.00-15.00	- To explore advanced rehabilitation and task specificity in thoracic spine exercise prescription
	Practical Mobility, motor control, work capacity and strength exercise prescription, advanced rehabilitation for patients
	Evidence into practice using case studies
15.20-17.00	Objectives - Critical application of advanced knowledge and skills for the management of patients with upper quadrant presentations; chronic neck pain, rotator cuff pathology