

Vanessa Haines-Matos, BSc (Hons)OT; MSc (Experimental Psychology)

Vanessa qualified as an Occupational Therapist in 1998 from Brunel University with a view to pursue a specialist OT career in neurosciences/neuro-rehabilitation. Her work has embraced a variety of neuro-rehabilitation settings: acute, in-patient rehabilitation and the community, within and beyond the NHS, including international voluntary work.

One year post-qualification, Vanessa was awarded a sponsorship by the Hong Kong Society of Rehabilitation- in affiliation to the World Health Organisation- to undertake teaching and the clinical application of neuro-rehabilitation: through assessment, treatment and evaluation of adult and paediatric neurological cases (congenital/developmental and acquired conditions).

Vanessa worked as a senior lead OT at Sussex Rehabilitation Centre for several years-a regional neuro-rehabilitation centre which admitted patients with both organic and traumatic/acquired brain injury; neuro-degenerative conditions and spinal cord injuries. She worked in tandem with the neuropsychology team in order to link their neuro-psychometric assessments and cognitive-psychological evaluations with the functional implications that are manifest through the Occupational Therapy process of activity analysis. Vanessa's endeavour to apply clinical research- both to impairment- based and functionally approached clinical practice- was always at the fore of her neuro-rehabilitation.

Vanessa's interest in cognitive/neuropsychology, lead her to undertake an MSc in Experimental Psychology at Sussex University in 2006. She was motivated by a desire to understand the underlying neuropsychological mechanisms that drive human behaviour and the consequences of the disruption of these mechanisms on neurological function. She is a passionate advocate in research-based practice and in bridging the gap between academic research and clinical application.

Following her MSc, Vanessa gained experienced in case management, specialising in brain injury and secondary conditions which impact the client's ability to re-enter employment. Addressing the psychological adjustment to disability was also a significant feature in the role.

Vanessa currently works as a Clinical Specialist OT in stroke rehabilitation in Western Sussex Hospitals' Trust, NHS. Vanessa's role involves MDT service development of an emergent stroke rehabilitation service as part of a comprehensive stroke pathway- as recommended in the National Clinical Guidelines for Stroke. Vanessa also leads the Neuro- OT service in Worthing and Southlands Hospitals, where she takes responsibility for the strategic clinical and managerial steering of the OT service within the in-patient stroke pathway.