

Spinal Cord Injuries-Description

Written by Administrator

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SPINAL CORD INJURIES

With 247,000 Americans currently living with a spinal cord injury, and approx. 11,000 injuries occurring each year, daily routines such as driving a car or walking down a flight of stairs, can unexpectedly result in a life changing injury with physical and lifestyle constraints. For the past 20 years, the number of injuries per million has remained stable at 40 incidents per million.

Children make up 5% of persons living with a spinal cord injury, which is usually the result of a traffic accident or fall. A much higher percentage group is the young adults. They, mostly male, make up 78.2% of Americans living with a spinal cord injury. Although, the average age this injury occurs has been increasing. In the 1970's the average age was 28.6 years. Currently, the average is at 38 years. This is largely due to the greater number of injuries occurring in persons over the age of 60.

Most frequent category at time of discharge is incomplete quadriplegia (34.3%), followed by complete paraplegia (25.1%), complete quadriplegia (22.1%), and incomplete paraplegia (17.5%). A study by Maynard showed that individuals with incomplete paraplegia or tetraplegia have higher rates of improvement in motor function.

Another study done by Maynard shows that 87% of patients with incomplete motor function and 47% of patients with incomplete sensory function at 72 hours after time of injury, recovered the ability to walk within the year.

Motor vehicle crashes and traffic accidents, at 50.4%, are the leading causes of spinal cord injury. Injuries caused by falls come in second at 23.8% while the rest follows with: violent acts (primarily gunshot wounds) at 11.2% and sports activities at 9%. However, there seems to be a

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decrease in work related injuries and an increase of injuries caused by sports and recreational activities.

Source: Catastrophic Injury Resource Center