



MANAGING CATASTROPHIC INJURIES

Chairperson: Carol Dennehy,
RN, CRRN, CCM, CLCP

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1:40-2:10pm



Catastrophic Injury Criteria

Cynthia Bourbeau

RN, CRRN,CCM,CNLCP®

Rehabilitation Nurse Case
Manager and Life Care
Planner

So, what is a catastrophic injury?

Depends
on who
you ask



American
Medical
Association
(AMA)



Case
Management
Association



United
States
Government

So, what is a catastrophic injury

AMA Guidelines:

Serious accident resulting in death, loss of limb, paralysis and other injuries which result in 55% or greater Permanent Impairment Rating.

-American Medical Association (AMA) Guidelines

So, what is a catastrophic injury

Government:

“An injury, the direct and proximate consequences of which permanently prevent an individual from performing any gainful work .

- per Title 42, of the U.S. Public Health and Welfare Code § 3796b

So, what is a catastrophic injury

Case Management Association:

A serious injury that results in severe and long-term effects on the individual who sustains it, including permanent severe functional disability.

-Commission for Case Manager Certification

So, what is a catastrophic injury?

Cindy Bourbeau:

A catastrophic injury is an injury which causes a loss or alteration of function and permanently impacts a patient's life.

The varying levels of injuries

Heinrich/Bird Safety pyramid

Severe accident:
fatal or permanent
incapacity

Serious accidents


Minor accidents

Incidents

Unsafe acts and conditions

The varying levels of injuries

Heinrich/Bird Safety pyramid



Severe accident:
fatal or permanent
incapacity

Serious accidents

Catastrophic Injuries:

- Generally .5% to 1% of claim frequency
- 20-30% of total incurred cost

Classifying a Case as Catastrophic

Common industry criteria for classifying a case as catastrophic

- Accident, Emergency Response, Emergency Care
- Initial Evaluation- Injuries and Diagnosis
- Severity of the injury
- Hospitalization within first 24 hours,
- Hospitalization and Length of hospital stay
- Prognosis is not known at time of injury
- Impact of Trauma

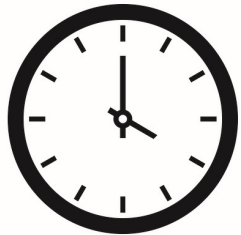
Most Common Catastrophic Injuries

Within Workers' Compensation

- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Quadriplegia
- Paraplegia
- Multiple Trauma
- Burns
- Amputations

Variables that affect Severity

Factors affecting the severity of the injury and the patient's ability to recover



Length of time before medical treatment is available



Support provided by family and friends



Any co-morbidities the patient may be experiencing



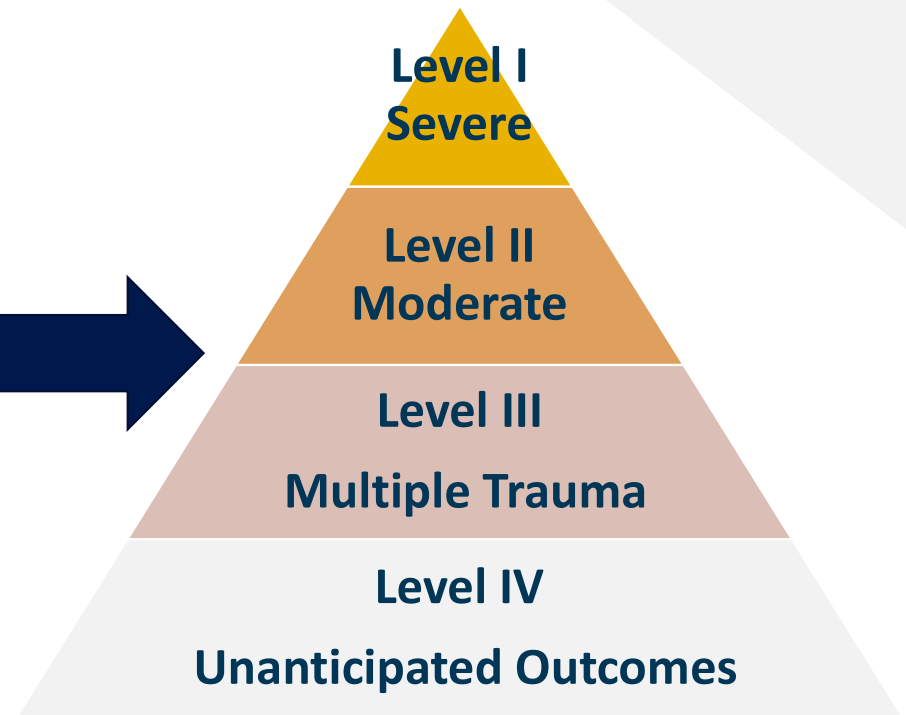
Life experiences and how the patients deals with adversity

Catastrophic Injury Levels

Levels within the top portion of the safety pyramid



Severe accident:
fatal or
permanent
incapacity



Catastrophic Case Management

Level I: Severe Injuries

These are patients with life threatening injuries; Prognosis is not known at time of injury; These patients have significant organ compromise and if they survive, they will live with severe impairment.

Catastrophic Case Management

Level II: Moderate Injuries

These would be severe injuries where medical stability was achieved soon after injury, but with permanent loss of function, sensation and disability.

Catastrophic Case Management

Level III: Multiple Trauma

Multiple injuries throughout the body that individually heal but a complicating factor occurs which results in ongoing impairment.

Catastrophic Case Management

Level IV: Unanticipated Outcomes

Diagnosis and Prognosis indicates a positive outcome and recovery, but accident or injury triggers an unanticipated response or health condition.

Catastrophic Case Management

Conclusion

**A CATASTROPHIC CASE =
INITIAL ACCIDENT AND INJURIES +
MEDICAL TREATMENT +
EACH INDIVIDUAL'S UNIQUE RESPONSE**

References

- AMA Guides
- Findlaw: - 42 U.S.C. § 3796b - U.S. Code - Unannotated Title 42. The Public Health and Welfare § 3796b.
- Commission for Case Manager Certification: Glossary of Terms, www.ccmcertification.org
- Heinrich, H.W., Industrial Accident Prevention: A Scientific Approach (1941)
- International Risk Management Institute: [Managing Volatility in Catastrophic and Medically Complex Cases](#)



Panel Discussion Case Presentation

Managing Catastrophic Injuries

Mr. Jones is a 42 year old man that fell off a ladder and was found by a co-worker unconscious. Mr. Jones was brought to the Emergency Room and found to have a C6 inferior process fracture with subluxation, right C6/7 jumped facet, subdural hemorrhage and skull fracture. Mr. Jones underwent a C6-7 reduction, laminectomy, C3-T2 fusion. Neurosurgery recommended conservative management of the subdural hemorrhage. Mr. Jones was initially intubated and then extubated but due to respiratory failure had to be re-intubated with ultimate tracheostomy placement. A PEG tube was also placed.

Mr. Jones had issues with autonomic instability due to spinal cord injury requiring pressors for stability. He also had a neurogenic bowel and bladder. Mr. Jones was initially having issues with confusion and decreased short term memory.

Mr. Jones was in the hospital 38 days and then transferred to inpatient rehabilitation hospital.

- Mr. Jones is married and has 2 children.
- He lives in a single-family home with two levels, bedroom and bathroom on the second floor.
- There are 4 stairs to enter the home.
- No significant past medical history
- Occupation: Maintenance technician
- Average weekly wage: \$821.20

Definitions

Impairment

- Objective limitations of physiological and psychological functioning

Disability

- Decrease in social and vocational functioning
- Determined by administrative and judicial decision makers (with medical input)
- Temporary vs permanent
- Partial vs total



Types of disability from work with examples

A floor nurse with a
sprained ankle

A teacher needing
multiple surgeries
after ATV injury

A builder with a non-
dominant hand
amputation

A pilot with a spinal
cord injury and
quadriplegia

Partial Temporary	Total Temporary
Partial Permanent	Total Permanent

Definitions

Physical (work) Capacity

- The obverse of impairment
- Can be measured objectively (e.g., physical capacity evaluation)

Work Tolerance

- A psychophysical concept
- Imperfectly related to impairment and physical capacity
- As reported by the patient

Is s/he disabled from work?

- 43 year-old man, quadriplegic after a traumatic spine injury?
- 25 year-old woman with an amputation of her left 5th finger and phantom pain?
- 52 year-old man with IDDM and neuropathic pain?
- 33 year-old woman with a large HNP and radicular pain?
- 42 year-old man with carpal tunnel syndrome and chronic hand pain?

All have impairment, but work disability depends on the plan of care, available support, co-existing risk factors, and other circumstances