

Updates from WorkSafeBC

Looking for evidence on care of injured workers?

WorkSafeBC has an evidence-based practice group (EBPG) that reviews and analyzes key health care topics. While some of the reviews are evident in WorkSafeBC's policies and practices, most are updates on a particular topic and add to the science surrounding the issues; where necessary, the EBPG alters health care practices based on up-to-date evidence.

WorkSafeBC is the first workers' compensation board in North America to become an official affiliate of the Canadian Cochrane Network.

Many of the critical appraisals and evidence-based reviews done by the EBPG are based on standards established by the Cochrane Collaboration Network. Recently, the EBPG became an official affiliate of the Canadian Cochrane Network and Centre (www.ccnc.cochrane.org). This is the first time a workers' compensation board in Canada or the US has been granted this affiliation.

Some of the EBPG's reviews are available on our web site, WorkSafeBC.com, in the Health Care Provider

section (look under Customer Centres on the home page). Topics include:

- Artificial cervical and lumbar disc implants—A review of the literature
- Clinical guidelines for the treatment of low back pain
- Complex regional pain syndrome
- Lateral epicondylitis
- Musculoskeletal disorders of the upper extremities
- Opioid use in chronic non-cancer pain
- Otto Bock C-leg—A review of its effectiveness
- Spinal cord stimulation—Use in patients with complex regional pain syndrome

Postoperative rehabilitation guidelines

The evidence-based medicine web page also contains postoperative rehabilitation guidelines, ranging from ACL reconstruction and ankle ligament reconstruction, to carpal tunnel release, hernia repair, meniscectomy, rotator cuff repair, as well as wrist arthroscopic and open procedures.

These guidelines were developed after an extensive review of current literature and input from our visiting specialist clinic surgeons as well as other medical and surgical specialists and physiotherapists in BC.

The guidelines can be downloaded from the web site.

Input welcome

WorkSafeBC's evidence-based practice group is currently working on a number of projects, the largest being shoulder pain in adults, in conjunction with the BC Medical Association and the BC Ministry of Health.

The group welcomes further topic suggestions. Please contact Dr Craig Martin, senior medical advisor and head of WorkSafeBC's evidence-

based practice group, at 604 279-7417 or craig.martin@worksafebc.com.

Medical advisors available for consultation

WorkSafeBC medical advisors are readily available to assist physicians in establishing diagnoses or recommending treatment for injured workers with accepted WorkSafeBC claims. Medical advisors, if requested, will examine injured workers as a follow-up, but will not prescribe medications or provide ongoing care or treatment.

They can help expedite imaging or other diagnostic procedures, assist in referrals to WorkSafeBC-sponsored rehabilitation programs, or provide reassurance that further significant organic pathology is unlikely. If an expedited referral to a specialist is indicated, the medical advisor will discuss this with you.

To speak with a medical advisor or arrange an appointment for a patient, please call your nearest WorkSafeBC office or contact Medical Services at 604 244-6224.

Mark your calendars

This year's WorkSafeBC Physician Education Conference will be held 11 October 2008 at the Coast Capri Hotel in Kelowna, BC. It's a wonderful time to visit the region, as both the Okanagan Wine Festival and the Okanagan International Marathon will be underway, so mark your calendars and plan to attend. For updates, visit www.worksafebc.com/news_room/conferences.

—Peter Rothfels, BEd, MD, ASAM
WorkSafeBC Director of
Clinical Services and
Chief Medical Officer