

Title	Traumatic and non-traumatic spinal cord injury: A comparative analysis of the characteristics and organization of rehabilitation care and services in Québec
Agency	INESSS, Institut national d'excellence en santé et en services sociaux 2535 boul. Laurier, 5 ^e étage, Québec, QC G1V 4M3; Tel: 418 643-1339, Fax: 418 646-8349, inesss@inesss.qc.ca , www.inesss.qc.ca
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Aim

INESSS analyzed and summarized the scientific data on "non-traumatic spinal cord injury (NTSCI)" patient care to help further the discussion on how to most effectively organize the care and rehabilitative services offered to these patients in Québec, while referencing the continuum of care currently provided to patients with "traumatic spinal cord injury" (TSCI), who benefit from a highly structured system of services delivered by two specialized centers of expertise.

Conclusions and results

With regard to the organization of care and services, evidence from the scientific literature supports the Québec model of designating centers of expertise for patients with TSCI. The analysis shows that, unlike TSCI, data on the incidence of NTSCI are imprecise and likely greatly underestimated because such patients are not necessarily admitted to rehabilitation centers and are therefore not counted in the data available. Care management and pathways are often fragmented and not as well coordinated for these patients, which apparently makes the delay between the date of the precipitating event and the date of admission to rehabilitation longer. Recent observational data argue in favour of providing NTSCI patients with access to the same specialized and integrated systems of care and services as those provided for TSCI patients, which would allow for similar benefits when it comes to preventing complications, improving functional recovery and reintegrating patients into their home environment.

Recommendations

In light of these considerations, INESSS expresses its support in favor of the model of care and services offered to TSCI patients and issues some recommendations to the ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux (MSSS) with regard to the management of NTSCI patients. INESSS suggests to put the necessary mechanisms in place to better describe and tally the NTSCI patients in the province

as well as the resources required to respond to their needs. INESSS further recommends launching an initiative to designate service corridors so the patients suffering from NTSCI have access to a continuum of care of comparable quality to that offered to TSCI patients.

Methods

The literature search, particularly with regard to rehabilitation, covered primary research, literature reviews, systematic reviews, clinical practice guidelines and evaluation reports published between 1970 and 2012 on the characteristics of adult patients with TSCI and NTSCI and the organization and effectiveness of care and services for patients with both types of injury. The Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Evidence (SCIRE) project, a Canadian database of existing literature, and its method of appraising scientific evidence were used. Epidemiological data on Québec TSCI were taken from the Québec Trauma Registry (1996-2006), while data on NTSCI were taken from the MED-ECHO hospital discharge summary database (2000-2005).

Written by

Jean-Marie Moutquin, with the collaboration of Kathy Larouche, Marie-Hélène Mayot, Michel Rossignol and Catherine Truchon, INESSS, Canada