

## PSI Evidence-Based Newsletter

The **only** physiotherapy clinics in Ottawa **accredited** by the Canadian Physiotherapy Association for excellence in service

### Motor Vehicle Accidents (MVA's) - The Facts

- About 10% of all whiplash injuries become long-term in rear-end crashes, and 5% in frontal crashes.
- 1 person in 300 who has an MVA will develop chronic neck pain and symptoms.
- Patients with the lowest expectations of recovery after an MVA have a poorer recovery than those who have higher expectations.
- 15% of people still report neck and other symptoms three years after their MVA.
- Some of the strongest prognostic indicators are factors present before impact: pre-injury back pain, pre-injury depression/anxiety, high frequency of GP visits and a front position in the vehicle.

#### More!

- Typical clinical findings include: neck or jaw pain, paraspinal muscle tightness and spasm. There may be interscapular and/or low back pain.
- Headaches, dizziness, vertigo and blurred vision may occur.
- Some patients have insomnia, anxiety and/or depression.
- Arm weakness or numbness may indicate injury to the cervical nerve roots.
- Rates of Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are high in patients after serious MVA's.
- Soft tissue injury can occur at speeds of less than 20Km/hr.
- Most MVAs affect soft tissues, muscles, tendons or ligaments, which don't show up on X-Ray.
- Pain often doesn't appear until the day after the MVA. It usually peaks 1-2 days after the accident.

#### Physiotherapy helps!

- Research has shown that early mobilization using physiotherapy instead of a soft collar is superior in terms of pain intensity and disability.
- Further research has shown that active treatment reduced pain more than standard treatment (rest/collar).
- Early physiotherapy treatment (within 96 hours) has been shown to be more effective in reducing pain than delayed active treatment.
- During the acute stage Physiotherapists help the patients manage their pain through postural correction, exercise and if needed, modalities. They also offer re-assurance and education about the condition and prognosis.
- **Bottom line.** Re-assure your patients that they will get better, refer to physiotherapy straight away to get them moving and back to normal as quickly as possible.

### Why use PSI Physiotherapy and Sports Injury Centres?

- ✓ We improve level of function, ability to work, and quality of life.
- ✓ We aim for long-term results not just short-term pain relief.
- ✓ We use outcome measures such as the neck disability index (NDI) to monitor progress.