

## EDITOR'S PAGE

### *Spinal Cord* Editor's Page May 2008



Dear *Spinal Cord* reader,

This issue contains papers on very important topics of spinal cord medicine.

Three papers examine health-related outcome, sexual-health-related outcome measures and the prediction of life satisfaction.

Health-related outcome and life satisfaction are topics studied and reported more often, now that in medicine and rehabilitation medicine especially, physical and psychological outcomes are evaluated for their impact on general well-being. If a person becomes paralysed, he needs to be taken care of properly to survive, must be helped to get the most optimal rehabilitation and must be supported in his struggle to gain confidence in life again. The importance to include his environment in this process has been clearly demonstrated. Satisfaction in life can depend on many things and will differ from person to person. It depends greatly on character, means, social context and previous history. One person will be satisfied if, after rehabilitation, he can start working again, travel, go out, or just be able to live at home. Others will be satisfied if the understanding and love in their relationship stand the test of the terrible period. Some will be happy if they feel respected and others if they have enough food. In many, satisfaction will depend on several different factors together. It is good to keep in mind that every patient is a special, individual human being with their own preferences, expectations and hopes. Rehabilitation tailored to this individuality is most successful. Learning about possibilities of health-related outcome is part of the education process for every patient. 'How can I stay as healthy as possible; what are the highest risks; and how can I notice if something goes wrong. What follow up would I need?' Armed with this knowledge, the patient can help himself to live the rest of his life in an optimal way.

A second list of papers deals with gait performance in different environmental settings, shoulder kinematics, lipid profile and physical capacity, and objective assessment of mobility. All give information of great use for physical rehabilitation and prognosis.

This issue also contains another of the International Basic Spinal Cord Injury Data Sets—the one on lower urinary tract function. These data sets are a powerful tool for further research.

Chiari I malformation associated with syringomyelia was retrospectively studied in a large sample.

The report of spinal tuberculosis in KwaZulu-Natal is hopefully one of many papers to follow from Africa, a part of the world that most of us would like to know more about. Attendance of the ISCOS Annual Meeting in Durban at the end of August this year is a good way to start.

Complications and outcomes after spinal cord tumour resection in the United States from 1993 to 2002 are presented here, as is a study on TGF (transforming growth factor)-B1 and TGF-B2 expression after human traumatic spinal cord injury.

The issue also contains an interesting case report.

Enjoy reading.

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