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The Life-Altering Effects of Whiplash

A whiplash injury happens in seconds, yet it can take months or even years to recover. A recent study offers insight into how chronic whiplash impacts the lives of auto injury patients.

A group of French researchers evaluated nearly 900 patients immediately after a car crash. One year later, patients reported their symptoms. Here were the results:

- Among patients with mild to moderate injuries, fewer than half had fully recovered and just 20 percent of patients with severe injuries had.
- More than half of patients with severe injuries and 22 percent of mild to moderate injury patients reported that the crash affected daily life.
- Many patients reported the injury and the accompanying psychological trauma significantly affected their sex lives, relationships and families.
- Mild to moderate injury patients took an average of 75 days off of work, compared to an average of 245 sick days for those with severe injuries. Almost 1 in 3 severe whiplash patients said they no longer worked after the accident.
- Nearly half (46 percent) of patients with severe injuries reported suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. PTSD was more common in patients who also suffered from head injuries.

“One year after a road accident, the consequences for victims remain significant,” researchers concluded.

Earlier research has suggested that patients can experience the symptoms of whiplash for up to a decade after the original injury. Although auto injury victims may want to focus on their immediate needs, the research demonstrates how important it is to keep the long-term picture in mind when planning for medical care. Fortunately, chiropractors can help to minimize the risk of chronic pain by addressing the root cause of the injury.

References:

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