Spinal Cord Injury - Data in Haiti
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Abstract  The 2010 earthquake in Haiti resulted in over 150 persons sustaining spinal cord injuries (SCI). Haiti had few resources for SCI rehabilitation and no pre-quake inpatient SCI facilities. Small non-profit organizations assumed responsibility for providing acute and rehabilitative care, and the Haiti SCI Database was created to try and establish the number of beneficiaries with SCI known in Haiti. The Haiti SCI Working Group was established and slowly people with SCI were added to the database. It became clear that the services for this vulnerable group were clearly lacking. The information ascertained will be used to guide health professionals in establishing services within the country and will help identify main causes of injury. Healing Hands for Haiti (HHH) has 92 registered beneficiaries and continues to accept new clients each month.

Introduction
Anecdotally, patients with SCI were admitted to hospital for up to 2 weeks and then discharged home. The majority died within 1-2 years post injury due to overwhelming infection, renal failure, and pressure ulcers. The earthquake on 12 January 2010 highlighted their plight and steps were taken to create, establish and maintain SCI specific care in Haiti initiated by a small number of international specialist NGO’s.

Methodology & Results
The Coordinator has presented at various Government level Meetings, Hospitals and via the PAHO Health Cluster Meetings to ask for assistance in collecting data.

The first ever confidential SCI database was set up in March 2010 and coordinated to collect information including:

- Name: Aim to avoid duplication
- Date of birth: Majority aged 20-35yrs
- Gender: More females injured in earthquake (cooking supper)
- Demographics: Useful for clinic, CBR
- Last Hospital known: For follow up
- Cause of injury: Earthquake 51%, Gunshot 14%, Falls-trees 12%, Vehicle accident 11%, Non-traumatic 12%
- Injury details and treatment: fixation?
  Level of injury. Pressure ulcers
- ASIA score: A (majority), B, C, D.
- NGO input: Community follow up?
- Date and reason for death: 9 known

The SCI Working Group continues to be instrumental in assisting in data collection.

Key Results
232 SCI individual entries to date
122 women. 110 men.
Majority aged 20-35yrs
Majority complete paraplegic
Majority sustained Grade 4 Pressure Ulcers
9 known deaths

SCI Working Group Response
- Two SCI 2 day workshops (in French/Creole), attracting 70 learners to each. A further is planned for January 2012.
- Main SCI sites have provided in house training for Nurses and Physiotherapy Technicians.
- The HHH SCI Team provides training to hospital staff and nursing/medical students.
- SCI Mobile Teams (St Boniface and Handicap International with HHH) have been active in the community to provide home care to beneficiaries in inaccessible places.
- SCI specific medicine obtained from international sources and provided for free.
- The SCI Working Group meets every 3-4 months and aims to remain proactive for this vulnerable group.
- Reports show 10+ new SCI per month.

Recommendations for Haiti
- Prevention of injury
  - First on the scene SCI specific training
  - SCI Education for health professionals
  - PM&R training for doctors in Haiti
  - PT & OT Training in Haiti
  - Rehabilitation Nurse Training in Haiti
  - Disability Awareness & CBR
  - Pressure Ulcer prevention training
  - Availability of SCI specific medication
  - Availability for appropriate wheelchairs
  - Accessibility to all public buildings
  - Accessibility to public transport
  - Increase in number of Rehab Clinics
  - Increase in number of SCI inpatient facilities
  - Local SCI Coordinator
  - Creation of SCI Association
  - SCI Specific Peer Support Groups
  - Established links with Paralympics
  - Continuing input by international specialists in SCI care

Conclusions
Data collection has been sporadic and has been reliant on NGO’s forwarding information as they come across beneficiaries with SCI in hospitals and in the community; Statistics are only as good as the data provided and there are clearly gaps in information received. SCI patients are surviving longer post earthquake if receive appropriate care. Many SCI’s and associated problems are preventable/avoidable.

References
1. Haiti SCI Working Group haitiSCI@hhh.org
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