

[IMAGE]

Back Pain: Rapid Recovery or Long Lasting?

Most back pain research is devoted to identifying risk factors for acute low back pain, or pain that is severe and short-lasting, although long-term back pain is responsible for far more days missed and dollars lost at work. Risk factors for chronic back pain are different than those for acute back pain; chronic cases involve more individual, psychological, and workplace variables. Is it possible to identify which acute back pain cases will progress into costly chronic cases?

The authors of this study, published recently in *Spine*, examined workers' compensation claims to determine if a variety of factors reported by back pain sufferers at their initial time of injury claim could distinguish those at high risk for chronic pain. Three high-risk groups were assessed: nurses and nurses' aides, manual workers, and drivers.

Of the 24% of claimants still receiving monetary compensation three months after their initial claim, job dissatisfaction and poor workplace relations were not linked to chronic low back pain. Factors associated with progression from acute to chronic back pain were moderate-to-severe disability, severe leg pain, obesity, and no "light" duties available upon returning to work.

If you injure your back on the job, be sure to talk to your doctor of chiropractic about any symptoms that appear after injury, even if they may seem unrelated. By obtaining the most diagnostic information possible, your chiropractor can help get you back on your feet and working again in a short amount of time.

Reference:

Fransen M, Woodward M, Norton R, et al. Risk factors associated with the transition from acute to chronic occupational back pain. *Spine* 2002;27(1), pp. 92-98.

To read more about back pain, go to <http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/backpain.html>.

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