

The Psychological Impact of Acute Occupational Hand Trauma

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Abstract : This study expands on recent findings and offers a new perspective on recovery from injury and return to work (RTW) after an acute traumatic occupational hand injury. Recovery is a complex medical and psychosocial process. A number of predictor variables were studied simultaneously to identify the bio-psychosocial variables that impede recovery. An unexpected phenomenon to emerge from this study was the high incidence of complications within the hand-injured patient sample. Twenty six percent ($n = 71$) of the total sample ($N = 263$) required a second operation due to complications. This warranted further investigation. Results confirmed that complications not only significantly delayed the RTW outcome but also had a profound psychological impact on the individuals affected. Research has found that surgical complications are usually the result of incorrect early assessment and management. A strategic plan needs to be implemented to ensure the optimal level of surgical care is provided for managing acute traumatic hand injuries to avoid such complications.

Keywords : occupational hand trauma, psychological recovery, return to work, psychology

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