



## Illness Perception of the Persons with Spinal Cord Injury

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Spinal cord injury (SCI) is damage to the spinal cord that causes temporary or permanent changes in its function. SCI is a life-changing event which has profound effects on domains like physical, psychological, social, sexual, and vocational aspects of the person with SCI. This injury is a high-cost chronic disability, and the long-term complications increase morbidity and decrease community participation and health-related quality of life. The psycho-social impact of the SCI is more concerned and has a major impact on the affected individuals, their families and the society.

How a PwSCI organizes his/her subjective beliefs related to their experiences and current condition due to the neurological condition. Self-regulatory model of illness was proposed three stages such as cognitive illness representations, emotional representations, and illness comprehensibility. Cognitive and emotional representations of the illness are generated with the situational stimulus. The individual first represents the health concern, next they adopt coping with the condition and at last they appraise the effectiveness of these conditions. Leventhal and colleagues present a paradigm for knowing how specific symptoms and emotions encountered during a medical illness affect perception of illness and drive subsequent coping behaviour. The illness perception cognitive illness representations, emotional representations, and illness comprehensibility.

The illness comprehensibility is to measure the level of understanding about the illness. The cognitive representations are to elicit the insight about the consequences associated with the illness, timeline of the illness, personal control over the illness, treatment control for the illness, experiencing the illness symptoms. If a PwSCI reports poor illness comprehensibility it can be addressed

through the psycho education intervention to enhance the understanding of the illness. The other psycho-social interventions like supportive psychotherapy and teaching healthy coping skills can enhance the comprehension of both cognitive and emotional representations of the illness condition to cope healthy. The impact of the illness perceived by the PwSCI is not constrained to the individual only but also affects the family and the society as a whole.

Illness perception is a very important psycho-social determinant in the SCI recovery process. Reporting the low levels of illness perception among PwSCI will lead to adverse psycho-social sequelae post injury especially poor coping. This poor coping skills among PwSCI impacts on during the whole rehabilitation process. It is essential to address these psycho-social issues among PwSCI. Identifying the illness perception among the PwSCI timely and providing tailor made psycho-social interventions is the need of the hour. All the neurological rehabilitation centers must deliver the multidisciplinary team interventions for the PwSCI and their families. The psychiatric social workers or clinical psychologists can deliver such interventions to address the psycho-social issues. Seeking appropriate neurological rehabilitation services timely will change the illness perception of the PwSCI. Measuring the illness perception among PwSCI during rehabilitation period helps the multidisciplinary team to plan for the tailor-made interventions for the better outcomes. It is also important to understand the association between the illness perception and the socio-clinical variables of the PwSCI. Which helps to get the insights about the associated factors and required psycho-social interventions.