

Neuropathic pain in spinal cord injury – classification, diagnosis and therapy

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Abstract

Neuropathic pain represents a specific presentation of various known pain entities that can occur in the course of spinal cord injury. In individuals with spinal cord injury, both peripheral (at-level) and central (below-level) neuropathic pain frequently occur simultaneously. The clinical relevance of neuropathic pain in spinal cord injury is not only due to its considerable prevalence, but also to the limited availability of effective and evidence-based treatment options. This has serious implications for the healthcare of affected patients. Neuropathic pain commonly has a relevant impact on quality of life, characterized by complex interactions between pain itself, mental health and participation of patients in society. In summary, a well-structured and evidence-based approach, aimed at accurately identifying and optimizing treatment of these patients is essential. This is underscored by the fact that relevant literature providing valid evidence is still very sparse.

Keywords: spinal cord injury, neuropathic pain, pain management, pain classification

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