

Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Factsheet

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/scifacts.html>

The spinal cord, the central bundle of nerves extending from the brain and branching peripherally, is responsible for transmitting signals between the brain and the rest of the body. The spinal cord is located within the spinal column. Any damage to the spinal column could affect the spinal cord and result in temporary or permanent neurologic impairments.



Occurrence

- About 200,000 people are currently living with SCI in the United States.
- Annually, 15 to 40 new cases per million people—or 12,000 to 20,000 new patients—are estimated to occur.
- Alcohol has been found to play a major factor in 25% of spinal cord injuries.

Long-term Complications

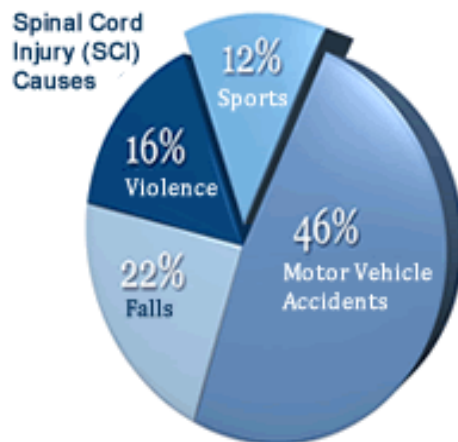
Traumatic injury to the spinal cord can result in neurologic impairments in any body system controlled by the affected nerves, including musculoskeletal (resulting in incomplete or complete paraplegia or tetraplegia), respiratory, urinary, or gastrointestinal. Long-term complications from SCI also include any psychological side effects, such as depression and anxiety

Cost

- Average annual medical cost: \$15,000–\$30,000 per year
- Estimated lifetime cost: \$500,000–more than \$3 million, depending on injury severity

Causes

- Motor vehicle accidents: 46%
 - Use of a seatbelt can reduce the odds of a spinal cord injury by 60%
 - Use of a seatbelt and airbag combined can reduce the odds of injury by 80%
- Falls: 22%
- Violence: 16%
- Sports: 12%



Demographics

- Males account for 80% of spinal cord injury patients
 - Most new SCI cases occur in persons younger than 30 years old;^{2,3} an estimated 50%–70% occur in those aged 15–35 years.²
- Estimated racial/ethnic distribution:
 - White: 65%
 - African American: 25%
 - Hispanic: 8%⁹
 - Other: 2%

Estimated SCI Racial/
Ethnic Distribution

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Hispanic	8%
Other	2%