

A Case Report of
Spinal Cord Injury
Interprofessional Education

M.M.

Case Writer
IPE Pain Initiative

**“You need to make the most of what you have.”
A Case Report of Chronic Pain**

Presenting Condition: “I was in a tragic automobile accident eighteen years ago.”

M.M. is a 68 y/o female wife, mother, and grandmother who has C5 tetraplegia. She is disabled and reports “I cannot feel anything from my breasts down and I only have partial movement in my right arm and hand”. M.M. was a victim of a motor vehicle accident eighteen years ago, where she fractured her C4-C6 vertebrae and obtained a spinal cord injury. She reports that she is unable to do several daily tasks on her own. M.M. describes her pain as dull and constant. The source of her discomfort is her left arm, which often spasms causing pain that radiates from her left scapulae down to her left hand. The pain is most severe when she is tense or if she is moved improperly. Shortly following her accident, she obtained a service dog that significantly improved her ability to be self-sufficient. The dog can retrieve items that she needs on demand and also serves as a companion. Several physical modifications have been done to her home to improve her daily life. One of M.M.’s biggest fears since the accident is becoming addicted to medication; she refuses to use narcotics for alleviating pain. She does not take any pain medications but does take Baclofen to help reduce spasticity. Physical therapy along with massage therapy and other relaxation techniques help with controlling her pain.

Patient Profile:

Age: 68

Height: 5’2”

Weight: 200 lbs.

Language(s): English

Condition(s): spinal cord injury; tetraplegia; dystonia; diabetes mellitus; depression; chronic UTI’s

Past Medical History

Past Illnesses: sleep apnea on Bipap with oxygen

Injuries: Fractured C4-C6 vertebrae

Immunizations: unknown

Medications:

- Prescribed: 1 probiotic (daily); 1 Paxil (daily); 1 Glipizide 5 mg (daily); 1 Januvia (daily); 3 Baclofen orally 20 mg (daily); 1 Lipitor 10 mg (daily); 2 Ciprofloxacin 500 mg (for 14 days (when needed))
- Over the counter: 1 baby aspirin 81mg (daily); 2 Tums (daily); flaxseed oil; multivitamin; Vitamin C; Vitamin D3

Allergies: Morphine-reaction: headache
Triple antibiotic-reaction: serous blisters

Surgical History: 1980 partial hysterectomy
2003 Cervical vertebral fusion
2003 Baclofen pump placement

2005 Baclofen pump removal
Suprapubic catheter placement (year unknown)

Hospitalizations: Pulmonary embolism; Pneumonia; Urosepsis

Personal Health Influencing Behaviors:

Diet: no specific diet modification

Exercise: arm stretches—especially on the left

Sleep Patterns: unknown

Caffeine Use: one-two cups of coffee daily

Alcohol Use: none

Nicotine Use: none

Illicit Drug Use: none

Family Medical History:

Father: lung cancer, CAD

Mother: Diabetes Mellitus

Brother: rectal cancer

Social History and Lifestyle: M.M. lives with her husband and service dog, Melody. She is a mother of three daughters and also a grandmother. Before her accident, M.M. was a school nurse. Now, she enjoys socializing with her friends, as well as spending time with her loving family, especially her grandchildren. She is also fond of fine dining and traveling with her husband.

Glossary of Terms

1. **Baclofen:** a muscle relaxant and an anti-spastic agent. It is used to treat muscle symptoms including spasms, pain, and stiffness caused by multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, or damage to the brain or spinal cord.
2. **C5 Tetraplegic:** loss of motor and sensory function below the C5 spinal cord level. Patients require assistance in bathing, bowel and bladder care and several other daily tasks.
3. **Ciprofloxacin:** an antibiotic used to treat infections including urinary tract infections.
4. **Dystonia:** a neurological movement disorder that causes involuntary contractions of muscles resulting in twisting and repetitive movements.
5. **Glipizide:** used to help control blood sugar levels in individuals with type 2 diabetes.
6. **Januvia:** used to lower blood sugar levels in individuals with type 2 diabetes.
7. **Lipitor:** used to lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels in the blood. It lowers the risk of chest pain, stroke, heart attack, or certain heart and blood vessel problems.
8. **Paxil:** a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) used to treat depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, and premenstrual dysphoric disorder.
9. **Pulmonary embolism:** blockage of the main artery of the lung most often because of a blood clot originating in a vein of the leg or pelvis. It presents with labored breathing, chest pain and rapid heart rate.
10. **Urosepsis:** a toxic condition caused by the leakage of urine into bodily tissues.