The treatment and rehabilitation of traffic accident victims

Record Status
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Citation

Authors' objectives
To summarise and critically analyse the current facts concerning the acute care, treatment and rehabilitation of trauma victims and evaluate the trauma care in Sweden.

Authors' conclusions
The use of triage schemes is supported. Among other factors, it is important to know how the injuries were incurred. The use of transportation by helicopter should be considered to a greater extent where the distance to the nearest hospital is large. The cooperation between different units that take care of trauma victims should be systematically developed. In the largest cities the possibility to centralise the care of the severely injured to some of the hospitals should be considered. Criteria for qualifications of doctors and other personnel that are responsible for the care of trauma victims should be specified. All doctors that take part in the trauma care should have a basic special training. Severely damaged trauma patients should always be primarily judged by a specialist. The preliminary assessment of severe trauma cases should be done by specialists in anaesthesiology and surgery or orthopaedics. Hospitals which cannot meet this basic requirement should not receive severe trauma cases. The importance of the psychological treatment of trauma patients and their relatives must be observed. Each acute care hospital in Sweden should continuously evaluate its activities, as a necessity for maintaining sufficient quality of care. To compare quality, it is necessary to prospectively register the management of all severe trauma cases. This can be done by consistently using a common, international registry system to code individual injuries and their management. These data can then be transferred to a national trauma registry. Such a registry should include the long-term outcome concerning the scope of injury, which also requires registering information from insurance companies regarding the level of disability. Only a few rigorous studies exist on the rehabilitation of traffic victims, and the various methods used in this field often rest on poor scientific foundations. Therefore, we are in urgent need of rigorous prospective studies concerning rehabilitation methods for different types of injuries.

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Address for correspondence
P.O. Box 3657, SE-103 59 Stockholm, Sweden. Tel: +46 8 4123200, Fax: +46 8 4113260 Email: info@sbu.se

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