

# Spine Management Report

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## *Grades of Neck Injury in Traffic Accidents*



Diagnosis and management of cervical spine injuries can be difficult, especially when there is no clear injury to the intervertebral disc or spinal nerves. What can make that even more difficult is our inability to categorize the patient so we can triage accordingly. The medical literature often discusses delayed treatment and overuse of narcotics as common pitfalls in managing neck pain post trauma.

To help aid us in the diagnosis and management of traumatic cervical spine injuries, in 1995 there was a highly regarded publication that reviewed the scientific basis for different categories of neck injury.

***“The Quebec task force proposed a classification system to define the severity of the whiplash injury. In Grade 1 the patient complains of neck pain, stiffness, or tenderness with no positive findings on physical exam. In Grade 2 the patient exhibits musculoskeletal signs including decreased range of motion and point tenderness. In Grade 3 the patient also shows neurologic signs that may include sensory deficits, decreased deep tendon reflexes, muscle weakness. Grade 4 the patient shows a fracture.” (pg 1)***

The classification of patients using these “Grades” as a guide helps us to relate their injury to the type of tissue involved. This in turn provides a prognosis and wound repair window for the injured patient. A thorough interview and physical examination including imaging when medically necessary, is critical to understanding the degree of injury. Applying the knowledge obtained in the examination leads us to better categorize these injuries into mechanical/non-specific and anatomically based conditions. Working with a **Spine Management Physician™** helps to ensure that we achieve a timely diagnosis and work through a management plan oriented to the type and degree of tissue injury.



NATIONAL SPINE MANAGEMENT GROUP  
LEADERS IN ACADEMIC SPINE CARE

### REFERENCES:

1: Bragg, K. J., & Varacallo, M. (2022). Cervical Sprain. In StatPearls [Internet]. StatPearls Publishing.