



## ***Common job features for those who return to work after SCI***

### ***Purpose***

To identify job features that could raise chances of people with SCI going back to work after injury.

### ***Summary***

- Generally, people with SCI worked in jobs that required:
  - sitting (58%)
  - upper or multiple limb use at once (44%)
  - little use of strength (83%)
  - some post-secondary education (college or undergraduate degree)
- Power or manual wheelchair use was not related to the types of job characteristics

### ***Possible Applications***

- Return to work rehabilitation plans for people with SCI should focus on the person's skills, interests and education, with little emphasis on type of wheelchair use.

### ***Research Abstract***

Although individuals after spinal cord injury (SCI) demonstrate a breadth of ability and employment potential, return-to-work (RTW) outcomes are low. In Canada, only 38% of individuals RTW after SCI. Refining the process of job suitability and enhancing job search strategies have been suggested to improve RTW outcomes. Our primary study objective was to identify occupational attributes of jobs performed after SCI that might be used to inform vocational rehabilitation strategies and improve RTW outcomes after SCI. A secondary analysis of participants from the Study of Health and Activity in People with Spinal Cord Injury employed in an occupation for which they received pay, was conducted. Frequency distributions for various occupational attributes including physical demands and educational requirements were examined across 181 reported occupations.  $\chi^2$ -tests identified whether the primary mode of mobility was related to occupational physical demands. Analysis of the physical demand attribute identified that 58% of occupations required sitting and 33% required sitting/standing or walking. Forty-four percent of occupations required upper or multiple limb coordination. Eighty-

three percent of occupations required a limited strength capacity. Sixty percent of occupations required college education and 58% required an undergraduate university education.  $\chi^2$ -analysis revealed nonsignificant associations between primary mode of mobility and physical demands. In conclusion, a breadth of occupational attributes in jobs performed by individuals after SCI was identified. These results are suggested to inform future vocational rehabilitation strategies.

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