

Spinal Injuries Awareness Week (6-12 November 2011) Focus on Transverse Myelitis

Walking one day, spinal cord injured the next? How? Why? I didn't have an accident!

Did you know that a spinal cord injury can occur as a rare complication of a common illness? It's known as "transverse myelitis" where nerve damage occurs because of swelling on the spinal cord. This usually involves nerves that control movement, feeling and function of vital organs (e.g. breathing and weeing).

Transverse myelitis affects about 1-4 people in a million. About 20% of these are children. Recovery is good in 1 in 3, another 1 in 3 have a partial recovery and the final third are left with complex and life-long impairments. Sadly, babies and infants affected (under 3's) have poor outcomes. Transverse myelitis usually starts off with a fever, increasing loss of movement and feeling in the legs and sometimes changes to bladder and breathing amongst things.

People affected by transverse myelitis benefit from being supported by teams that have specialist skills and knowledge in the area of spinal cord injury.

If you wish to learn more about transverse myelitis in children, please visit www.spinecare.org.au

The SpineCare Foundation, a division of Northcott Disability Services, supports education, service provision and research into childhood spinal conditions.

