

MD Consulting Services LLC

Physicians Helping Attorneys Helping People™

www.mdcsco.com 303-619-0777

Newsletter

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This Month's Question

Crush Injuries-How Serious Is an Amputation of All Five Toes on One Foot?

MD Consulting Services Response

This month we have been asked to consult on a large number of “slip and fall” injuries. Although a crush injury is not exactly a slip and fall it does fit into a large grouping of similar injuries and accidents. We were recently asked to review a case in which a several ton container box fell on the client's right foot.

The pertinent portions of the radiology report indicated that there were no fractures of the metatarsals (toes), however, a number of joint dislocations. Unfortunately, conservative treatment could not stop gangrene from setting in and the decision was made to do a transmetatarsal (all five toes) amputation on the right side to prevent the spread of gangrene up the client's leg.

This kind of surgery is not without its own potential risks and complications, which can include postoperative infection; chronic stump ulceration, stump deformity, wound dehiscence (separation of the layers of a surgical wound) and life-long gait problems.

On first glance by judges, juries and other lay people, the first reaction often is “how bad could this amputation really be?” because it's not like losing a foot or a whole or partial leg. In fact this surgery, even though necessary or potentially lifesaving will always leave the client with significant life-long problems. To summarize, not only are there going to be stump care issues due to the location of the amputation, several other problems often present including the need for life-long follow up with a very good foot clinic specializing in post-surgical amputations. One of the reasons for this life-long care is the potential for complications secondary to the amputation like the formation of keratotic lesions (overgrowth of skin layers) on the plantar surface of the foot that requires debridement and well as problems resulting from his abnormal gait. In

addition clients will require medications including pain medication and medications to keep the site of the amputation soft and pliable.

Clients need life-long follow up care for biomechanical issues related to gait. This kind of follow up includes the need for life-long intermittent physical therapy and ongoing chiropractic care. Clients need help to minimize the effect of the flattening of the arch of the foot as well as resultant neck and low back pain secondary to the abnormal gait created by the amputation. They will need ongoing massage therapy and possible steroid injections as well. In some of these cases clients will need further corrective surgery as time goes on.

Clients will also need life-long help with orthotic and prosthetic management. Clients require life-long help with protective footwear including custom made shoes, perhaps rocker bottom shoes with a steel shank and anterior filler. In some individuals plastizote-lined ankle orthotics are required. Also in some cases these individuals can be helped by prosthetic devices as well.

The medical literature reports that in most cases of transmetatarsal amputation there are strong psychological and social consequences. You will often see reports that clients are unable to do the activities required in their field of work. The loss of this person's chosen profession has profound financial and self-esteem consequences. Because of the loss of previously held positions vocational rehabilitation is usually needed.

Many clients also lose the ability to participate in the recreational activities that made up such an important and very significant part of life. The medical literature reports for many patients with transmetatarsal amputations psychological support is essential.

The lifetime cost for a man in his 20's projecting out to age 65 could be anywhere from \$120,000 to \$310,000 for all the treatment modalities and care needed.

Let Us Know How We Can Help You

- Review of Case Validity and Value
- Medical Summary Reports for Demand Letters
- IME Observation and IME Rebuttal Reports
- Reports Answering Specific Medical Questions
- Liaison to Treating Doctors
- Help with Strategies to Promote Medical Theories
- Interpretation of Meaning, or Lack thereof, of Medical Reports & Records
- Independent Record Reviews
- Referral to Medical Experts
- Medical Research

- Facilitation of Communication with Clients, Families, Professionals and Service & Governmental Agencies
- Medical Case Coordination
- Medical Expert Question Preparation

As you know, **we have purposefully kept our fees exceptionally low** allowing you the opportunity to have us review your cases early in your representation while controlling your expenses.

Please **CONTACT US** for information or testimonials from your colleagues.

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P.S. ---Please pass this Newsletter along to your colleagues.