

The Inside Scoop on key Medical Assessors

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As insurance professionals, over the years, most of us have had the opportunity to assist a wide range of people experiencing numerous different issues. This provides each of us with important insight regarding the most effective approach in various situations. Information that we learn on the job through first-hand, frontline experience is often the most valuable.

This issue of *The Sibley Report* is dedicated to sharing some of the insight we have gained through experience regarding Medical Assessors and how to get the most out of your Insurer Examinations (IEs). The attached chart provides a brief definition of a range of key Medical Assessors—as well as what you may not know—some tips and information that we hope you will find useful when referring for an IE.

For instance, did you know that...

- Many Anaesthetists specialize in pain management?
- Paediatrics has numerous sub-specialties, such as: Paediatric Neurology, Paediatric Neuropsychology, and Paediatric Ophthalmology?
- Gastrointestinal disorders are often a complication of spinal cord injury and may require the assistance of a Gastroenterologist?
- The professional that we commonly refer to as an “Ear, Nose, and Throat Doctor” is technically called an Otolaryngologist?
- Dermatologists are often involved with spinal cord injury clients assisting in the prevention/treatment of skin ulcers?

To find out more, please see the attachment: *Spotlight on key Medical Assessors and what you may not know...*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Assessor 	What you may not know: Things to consider...
Anesthetist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physician specialist in anesthesia: anesthesiology is the branch of medicine specializing in the use of drugs for surgery (e.g., general, spinal block, local, regional). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many Anesthetists also specialize in pain management.
Cardiologist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physician qualified in internal medicine with a sub-specialty in cardiology; the diseases of the heart and blood vessels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiac problems can often be a secondary complication to spinal cord injuries. • Pre-existing cardiac issues may have an impact on rehabilitation.
Chiropractor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctor of Chiropractic degree; chiropractics is the diagnosis and treatment of neuromuscular-skeletal disorders of the spine and other body joints by adjusting the spinal column or through other corrective manipulation. • Expertise in the interrelationship between the musculoskeletal structure and function of the body, particularly of the spinal column and nervous system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be involved in a range of back pain, neck pain, and headache treatments. • Often appropriate for: Section 42 Med-Rehab Examinations, Functional Ability Evaluations, and Ergonomic Assessments.
Dermatologist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physician specialist trained in dermatology; the study, diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the skin, hair, nails, oral cavity and genitals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often involved with spinal cord injury clients, assisting in the prevention/treatment of skin ulcers.
Endocrinologist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physician specialist who has sub-specialized in the diseases of glandular organs (e.g., diabetes mellitus, thyroid disorders, hormone disorders). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can help manage blood sugar levels and insulin dosages for clients who are injured and less active post MVA.
Family Physician <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physician with expertise in the management of a wide range of health problems in adults and children, previously referred to as a general practitioner or family practice physician. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is increasingly important to include the Family Physician as a member of the client's rehabilitation team from the onset of the file. For example, their expertise is beneficial in implementing Insurer Examination recommendations, referring to specialists, acting as a patient advocate, ect.

<p>Gastroenterologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist trained in gastroenterology: the study, diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the digestive system. These disorders may affect the esophagus (swallowing tube), stomach, small intestine, large intestine (colon), rectum, liver, gallbladder, or pancreas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gastrointestinal disorders are often a complication for spinal cord injury clients.
<p>Geriatrician</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician who specializes in the care of older adults; geriatrics is the branch of medicine that deals with problems and diseases of old age and aging people with a focus on optimizing quality of life and functional ability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the population ages, Geriatricians will play an increasingly important role. Expertise in teasing out issues regarding pre-MVA status related to cognition and MVA injuries. Beneficial in identifying issues like Alzheimer's disease, dementia, impaired overall function, stroke, and osteoporosis, as well as determining degree of competency regarding level of assisted living required and managing pain, mood, memory disorders, etc.
<p>Gynecologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist in gynecology and diseases affecting the female reproductive system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be required to address pelvic injuries in the female population (i.e., injury due to seat belt) Can be vital in assisting females with spinal cord injury and fertility issues.
<p>Haematologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist in hematology; the treatment of blood diseases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can assist in the treatment of the injured if blood disorders are present pre accident.
<p>Nephrologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist is the treatment of kidney insufficiency and kidney disease. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can address issues of kidney-related injuries. For example, may be involved in treating kidney issues with spinal cord injury clients.
<p>Neurologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist trained in neurology: the study, diagnosis, and treatment of the nervous system as it relates to health and disease. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate to assist with injury to any part of the nervous system, for example, brain, spinal cord, nerves, stroke, migraine, loss of sensation in any part of body, carpal tunnel syndrome, paralysis, seizures. Can be the key specialist sorting out issues for clients with ongoing symptoms of pain, numbness, tingling, shooting nerve pain, headaches, etc. Increased demand for this specialty because claims for headaches and dizziness are increasing.

<p>Neuropsychologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychologist with specialized training in neuropsychology; the diagnosis and treatment of the relationship between the brain and behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can assist individuals with brain injury or suspected brain injury due to the MVA or existing pre-MVA. Use psychological tests and assessment techniques to diagnose cognitive and behavioural deficits; not allowed to prescribe medication. Neuropsychological evaluation is necessary when there is evidence of a head injury as a result of the MVA.
<p>Neurosurgeon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist trained in neurosurgery; focuses on the diagnosis and surgical treatment of the brain, spinal cord, and nervous system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involved in spinal cord surgery, disc surgery, brain surgery, carpal tunnel surgery, etc.
<p>Occupational Therapist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulated healthcare professional trained to help patients manage activities of daily living like dressing, grooming, cooking, regaining vocational skills, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often involved in a range of assessments such as: In-Home Assessments, Attendant Care Assessments, Functional Ability Evaluations, Occupational Therapy, Return to Work Planning, etc.
<p>Ophthalmologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist in ophthalmology: the study, diagnosis and treatment (including surgery) of conditions and diseases of the eyeball and retina. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neuro-ophthalmologist has further training in diagnosing and treating eye injuries/diseases related to the nervous system/brain injury.
<p>Oral Surgeon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist in the surgical treatment of issues related to the jaw, face, teeth and associated structures (e.g., facial deformities, Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ), dental implants, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can assist in determining the extent of TMJ problems and associated treatment.
<p>Orthopaedic Surgeon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist in orthopaedic surgery; diagnosis and treatment (including surgery) of disorders related to the musculoskeletal system (e.g., bones and joints, including spine, knees, hips, elbows and shoulders). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often specialized with a focus on knee, hip, back, or shoulder. Provide opinions regarding, for example, treatment/future surgical interventions, ability to return to work (own occupation, modified work, alternate occupation, etc.) Often involved in Insurer Examinations related to a variety of injuries when sometimes the Orthopaedic Surgeon is not the appropriate specialist for the assessment.

<p>Otolaryngologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist in the medical and surgical treatment of disorders of the throat, larynx, nose, and ears. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not to be confused with an Audiologist; specializes in the non-medical evaluation and rehabilitation of hearing loss.
<p>Paediatrician</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist in paediatrics; diagnosis and treatment (but not surgery) of children and infants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous sub-specialties such as: Paediatric Neurologist, Paediatric Neuropsychologists, Paediatric Ophthalmologists, etc.
<p>Psychiatrist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist trained in psychiatry; the study, diagnosis, and treatment of mental, emotional and behavioral disorders in isolation or as they coexist with other medical or surgical disorders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlike psychologists, these specialists can prescribe medications such as antidepressants to help treat or manage disorders. Insurer Examination referral can be vital on those files where claimant has no access to a Psychiatrist or there is a long waiting list. Assist in teasing out issues on complicated files where there is a head injury with pre-existing mental health issues (ideally a NeuroPsychiatrist). Vital role in reviewing medications for mood disorders on files for claimant's with issues like depression and anxiety and making recommendations regarding therapeutic doses, augmenting medication, or changing medication.
<p>Psychologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ph.D. in Psychology and certified to diagnose and treat behavioural, emotional, and psychological disorders (e.g., post-traumatic stress and personality disorders). Diagnosis and treatment usually involves interviewing, as well as a range of psychological testing but is not allowed to prescribe medication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role on many files to tease out pre-MVA psychological issues that are having an impact on the rehabilitation process. Psychological Evaluation includes a variety of tests usually conducted by a Psychometrist with a clinical interview by a Psychologist. Psychometrist: typically has an educational background in psychology or related discipline and administers psychological tests under the supervision of a psychologist.
<p>Physiatrist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation; the diagnosis and rehabilitation of neuromusculoskeletal diseases and associated disabilities (i.e., brain injury, spinal cord injury, soft tissue injuries, fractures, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be thought of as a generalist who has the knowledge to comment on a variety of issues including playing a special role in spinal cord injuries, acquired brain injuries, and soft tissue injuries. On serious injury files, takes the leadership role, overseeing all care and recommending appropriate referrals to other specialists.

<p>Physiotherapist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulated healthcare professional trained to assess and treat the underlying causes of joint, muscle, nerve injuries and to provide effective treatment to help restore proper function to the body and, in the case of permanent injury, to reduce the impact of dysfunction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often involved in a range of assessments such as: Section 42 Med-Rehab Examinations, Functional Abilities Evaluations, Ergonomic Assessments, etc.
<p>Rheumatologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist in rheumatology; the study, diagnosis, and treatment of disorders that affect the joints and connective tissues with soreness and stiffness like rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, lupus, and fibromyalgia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involved in treating chronic and acute cases of, for example, Fibromyalgia, Chronic Pain Syndrome, Arthritis (Rheumatoid/Osteoarthritis), Lupus, etc.
<p>Speech Language Pathologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained to assist patients in restoring speech, communication functions, feeding, and swallowing issues. Recommend augmentative communication devices for patients with acquired brain injury (ABI). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can assist acquired brain injury (ABI) clients with return to work/school; helpful in determining communication assistance/devices required post ABI.
<p>Urologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician specialist trained in urology; the study, diagnosis, and treatment of abnormalities and diseases of the genital/urinary tract (kidneys, ureters, bladder). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be involved in a variety of issues, for example, treating urinary tract infections for clients who require catheterization, and providing recommendations for male spinal cord injury clients with erectile dysfunction.
<p>Vocational Specialists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained to provide a range of vocational disability management services to assist return to pre-accident employment and/or retraining to secure alternative employment. Qualifications include: Registered Rehabilitation Professional (RRP) and/or a Canadian Certified Rehabilitation Professional (CCRC) from the Canadian Association of Rehabilitation Professional (CARP); Certified Vocational Evaluators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a range of Vocational Assessments such as: Transferable Skills Analysis and Vocational Assessments, as well as conduct Psychovocational and Neuropsychovocational Evaluations in conjunction with Psychologists.