



Overview of Quebec Task Force Clinical Classification of Whiplash Associated Disorders

Disability
Management
Consultants

Burlington
St. Catharines
Windsor
London
Woodbridge
Peterborough
Ottawa
Halifax
Vancouver

1-800-363-8900
sibley@sibley.ca
www.sibley.ca

| Grade | Clinical Presentation |
|---------------------------|--|
| Grade 0 or WAD 0 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client does not complain of neck pain and no physical signs are observed by the examining health care practitioner. • These clients are uncommon and will not usually seek assistance, thus going undocumented. |
| Grade 1 or WAD I | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client complains of pain to health practitioner. • No physical signs are found i.e. normal range of motion, normal strength, no swelling. • Usually these clients suffer from small muscle lesions that are not significant enough to cause muscle spasm. |
| Grade 2 or WAD II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client complains of pain to health practitioner. • Musculoskeletal signs are found that could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limited range of motion ○ Spasm or Swelling ○ Point tenderness in neck or shoulders • Usually these clients have sprained ligaments in their neck and the muscle tears have caused bleeding and swelling. |
| Grade 3 or WAD III | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client complains of pain to health practitioner. • Neurological signs are found that could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decreased or absent reflexes ○ Decreased or limited skin sensation (Dermatomes) ○ Muscular weakness (Myotomes) • Usually these clients suffer from injuries to the neurologic system because of pressure on nerves or irritation secondary to sustained stretch of neural tissue. • These clients will almost always have limited range of motion and other musculoskeletal signs as well. |
| Grade 4 or WAD IV | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client complains of pain to health practitioner. • X-rays reveal fracture or dislocation |

- All clients with complaints of pain and musculoskeletal signs should be x-rayed (Grades II and above)
- Grade IV diagnosis requires IMMEDIATE surgical consultation.

Source: Interpretation by a Sibley & Associates' Physiotherapist of Spitzer WO, Skovron ML, Salmi LR, Cassidy DJ, Duranceau J, Suissa S, Zeiss E. Scientific Monograph of the [Quebec Task Force on Whiplash-Associated Disorders](#): Redefining 'Whiplash' and its Management. Spine 1995

*For further information about WADs, feel free to contact
Sibley & Associates at 1-800-363-8900.*