

Disability high amongst non-hospitalised injury victims

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Levels of ongoing disability amongst people injured, even when not hospitalised, has surprised a University of Otago research team.

The Prospective Outcomes of [Injury](#) Study (POIS) is tracking 2856 New Zealanders who suffered an injury which resulted in them being placed on ACC's entitlement claims register after either being hospitalised or receiving treatment without being hospitalised.

Lead researcher, Dr Sarah Derrett from the [Injury Prevention](#) Research Unit, says their latest analysis looked at the cohort three months after injury and found 39.4% of the 2079 people who were not hospitalised were dealing with disability, along with 53.6% of the 673 people in the hospitalised group.

"Often there is an assumption that people not admitted to hospital, don't have a serious injury or long-lasting disability. Our study has found a high proportion of those not admitted to hospital have an ongoing disability, and that's important."

Dr Derrett says the study, currently funded by the Health Research Council of [New Zealand](#), is tracking the cohort to identify factors associated with poor outcomes and slower injury recovery, so that these can be countered.

"Internationally, we don't know enough about the outcomes of injury long-term – and particularly about outcomes for those not hospitalised.

This study is assessing the burden of injury long-term and seeing if any particular groups are at risk of a poorer outcome than others."

In both hospitalised and non-hospitalised groups, pre-injury disability, [obesity](#) and higher injury severity were associated with increased odds of post-injury disability, but they were the only factors common to both groups.

They also found that among the non-hospitalised group, those who were injured due to an assault had three times the odds of disability compared to those not assaulted.

Dr Derrett says there is a considerable burden on people not admitted to hospital. For example, those with a [spine](#) or leg sprain/strain or dislocation, had twice the odds of disability three months after their injury.

"These people with injuries traditionally regarded as 'mild' are experiencing disability. As well as being concerned about disability borne by those admitted to hospital for an injury, we also need to be aware of what is happening to outcomes for the group not admitted to [hospital](#)."

Findings from the three-month follow-up were recently-published (*PLoS ONE* 7 (9):e44909) and presented today (Tuesday) at the World Injury Conference 'Safety 2012' in Wellington. Approximately 1000 delegates from around the world are in attendance.

Provided by University of Otago

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