



**Yellow Flags and Delayed Recovery:
What they are and what to do about them**

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1

Speaker

Marcos A Iglesias MD, MMM, FAAFP, FACOEM
Vice President, Chief Medical Director
Travelers

2

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Objectives

- Describe the impact of non-medical risk factors to functional recovery
- Outline the different behavioral factors that can delay an individual's recovery after an injury or illness
- Discuss how to evaluate these factors and know the tools for making appropriate referrals for intervention



4

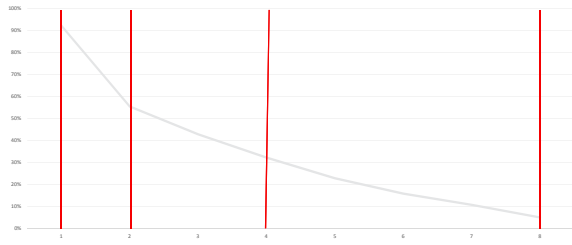
A tale of two injuries



5



Return to work by quarters after date of injury



IAABC Disability Management and Return to Work Committee, 2016

Needless disability

60 to 80%

of lost work days attributed to medical conditions in the United States involved time off from work that was not really required by the condition itself.



Jurkic M. et al. The Personal Physician's Role in Helping Patients with Medical Conditions Stay at Work or Return to Work. JGIM 2017

Worklessness

2 to 3 X

2 to 3 X

6X



Waddell G, Burton AK. Is work good for your health and well-being? London: The Stationery Office, 2006.

Worklessness

50% excess mortality



Gerdtham UG and Johansson M. A note on the effect of unemployment on mortality. J Health Econ. 2003;22(3):505-518.

Worklessness

Not working may be harmful to your health.



A biopsychosocial approach



Biological risk factors for delayed recovery

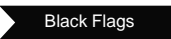


- Age
- Gender
- Comorbid conditions
- Opioids

See, for example, Iglesias MA. Comorbid conditions in Workers' Compensation. AMA Guides Newsletter. 2019.



Social risk factors for delayed recovery



- Compensation
- Administrative delays
- Iatrogenesis
- Nomoiatrogenesis

See, for example, Caruso G and Kertay L. Psychological factors in delayed and failed recovery and unnecessary disability. AMA Guides Newsletter. 2019.



Work risk factors for delayed recovery



- Heavy manual job
- Workplace climate
- Work overload and pressure
- Long commute distance



Work and other risk factors for delayed recovery

Blue Flags

- Job dissatisfaction**
- Low social support**
- Dysfunctional family situation**
- ACE**

See, for example, Caruso G and Kertay L. Psychological factors in delayed and failed recovery and unnecessary disability. AMA Guides Newsletter. 2019.



Psychological continuum

Yellow Flags

Orange Flags

- Psychosocial barrier**
- Psychological symptom**
- Psychiatric disorder**



See, for example, Caruso G and Kertay L. Psychological factors in delayed and failed recovery and unnecessary disability. AMA Guides Newsletter. 2019.



Psychosocial risk factors for delayed recovery

Yellow Flags

- Fear**
- Catastrophic thinking**
- Recovery expectation**
- Perceived injustice**

See, for example, Caruso G and Kertay L. Psychological factors in delayed and failed recovery and unnecessary disability. AMA Guides Newsletter. 2019.



Psychosocial risk factors for delayed recovery

Yellow Flags

- Maladaptive coping**
- Absence of positive adaptive behaviors**
- Job avoidance**



Psychological risk factors for delayed recovery

Orange Flags

- Depression – MDD**
- Anxiety – Anxiety disorders**
- Poor coping – Adjustment disorders**



See, for example, Caruso G and Kertay L. Psychological factors in delayed and failed recovery and unnecessary disability. AMA Guides Newsletter. 2019.

Psychological risk factors for delayed recovery

Orange Flags

- Unpleasant experience –**
- Traumatic experience –**
- PTSD**
- Maladaptive behavior –**
- Personality disorder**



Identifying barriers



22

Screening tools: General



- Orebro
- STarT
- Back Disability Risk Questionnaire (Shaw)
- Acute Low Back Pain Screening Questionnaire



23

Screening tools: Specific factors



- Pain catastrophizing – PCS
- Perceived injustice – IEQ
- Fear avoidance – TSK, FABQ



24

Screening tools: Specific factors



- Depression – PHQ-9; PHQ-2; BDI
- Anxiety – GAD-7; BAI
- Substance abuse – CAGE; AUDIT



25

Interventions

- Physician role
- Motivational interviewing
- Coaching
- Functional restoration
- Psychotherapy



26



27
