

## Whiplash Injury clampdown!

Well tell me something new! Most Physiotherapists have been saying this for years!!! Just like low back pain whiplash injuries has become a condition that is used for fraudulent purposes because either the Clinician is afraid to confront the perpetrator because of the fear of conflict and/or possible loss of a working relationship or they are going through the motions of assessment and treatment without thinking about the symptoms being described and what should/can be a realistic symptom in view of the type of accident, position of the complainant within the car, point of contact between vehicles and most importantly the direction of the force generated from the impact.

I suppose the readily available information on the internet about symptoms of the conditions has some part to play. However, there is a fact which in the main goes unnoticed; just like those bits of paper you find in drug packets listing a number of possible side effects it is rare for somebody to have all the symptoms of whiplash at the same time! Furthermore, most symptoms are time dependent!! Thus for example a headache associated with whiplash is not just a headache. The description of the headache and its location in the head at the time of assessment and during the period before that gives a wealth of information. Just like pain anywhere else, the behaviour of the pain is important. I like it when a patient tells me that some pain is nerve pain!! My alarm bells start ringing in the back of my head; how do they know what nerve pain is when even seasoned professional struggle? My alarm bells also go off when patients can describe with frightening accuracy the type of symptom and where it is.

Another concern is when patients say that they have been told that they will suffer symptoms for up to 2 years.....really? Also they require 6 treatment sessions of Physiotherapy.....really? This type of information is at best misleading and at least pure guess work and does nothing more than provide a barrier to recovery. The effect is the same as when a label is given to an ailment reinforcing the notion that a claim should not be settled until either complete resolution of symptoms or when the cheque is 'big enough'.

It is about time musculoskeletal conditions are looked at properly by Clinicians who know what they are talking about and most importantly can perform the correct tests properly to corroborate the legitimacy of the symptoms described by patients. After all, I was taught that what is worth doing is worth doing well!!