





HEALTH  
SYSTEM



Washington

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School of Medicine

**Dedicated to improving the lives of people with Spinal Cord Injuries**

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## Project Summary

Emerging technology in the field of computer-based learning, which incorporates graphics, text, video, and sound offers new opportunities to enhance the learning experience. The Rehabilitation Learning Center (RLC), seeks to capitalize on this technology for the benefit of individuals undergoing rehabilitation. The RLC will create a computer-based rehabilitation environment designed to educate individuals with acute or chronic spinal cord injuries (SCI) and empower them with the knowledge necessary to make informed choices regarding life after spinal cord injury. This project is run almost entirely by volunteers. We are actively seeking individuals interested in volunteering and lending their expertise to the project.

The components of this project are:

### **A Multimedia Information System**

The RLC is developing an interactive multimedia information system designed as a bedside "digital consultant." In the first iteration of the RLC, we will limit the scope of our efforts to three core topics that our clients have identified as important to the rehabilitation process: "Orientation to Rehabilitation," "Orientation to Spinal Cord Injury," and "Mobility Independence." Instructional programs in these areas are being developed as linked modules that can be managed by a rehabilitation professional while simultaneously allowing the client free access to information, simulations, and educational games. Prototype information modules will be developed for three discrete levels of spinal cord injury: C6 tetraplegia, T4 paraplegia, and T12 paraplegia. The information system will be tested with a prospective cohort of rehabilitation clients with SCI treated at Harborview Medical Center. Feedback obtained during this phase of the project will guide refinements of current information modules and further module development.

### **Web Applications**

The purpose of this web site is two-fold. First, the RLC seeks to provide a world wide resource for information on spinal cord injury and disease. By creating a visually rich web environment, we hope to disseminate information about our project as well as allow certain aspects of the system available to all disabled and non-disabled users with access to the Internet. We are using this web site as a testing platform for internet networking applications of our technologies. We will be developing, through this web site, text-based information, interactive slide and multimedia presentations. We are Netscape enhanced to fully leverage our technology to the best available tools.

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## Goals and Objectives of the Project

- The person with spinal cord injury, through the assistance of the RLC, will acquire the skills and resources needed to face a less than fully accessible world.
- By providing information to clients about living with their disability, the RLC will assist in preventing the many potential complications following SCI.
- Enhanced self-esteem among SCI clients; by maximizing functional ability; providing resources to clients seeking training, education, and social support, the RLC will improve our clients' rate of reemployment.

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## Contact Information

**Mailing Address:**

The Rehabilitation Learning Center  
216 South Kingshighway  
St. Louis, MO 63110

**Phone:**

(314) 454-7757 voice  
(314) 454-5277 FAX

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## Causes of SCI



**Motor vehicle accidents** represent nearly 50% of injuries. Most of these are alcohol related.



**Results of violence** such as gunshot and stab wounds. While still a small percentage (around 25%) of the total, SCI as a result of interpersonal violence has increased dramatically in the past few years, particularly in urban environments.

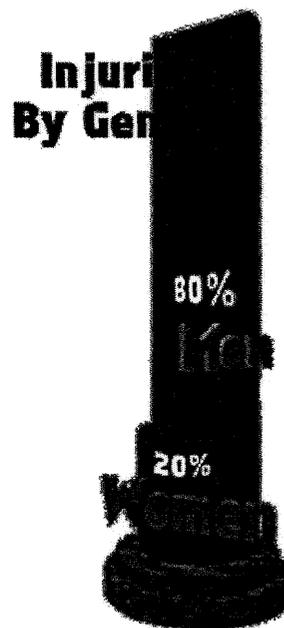
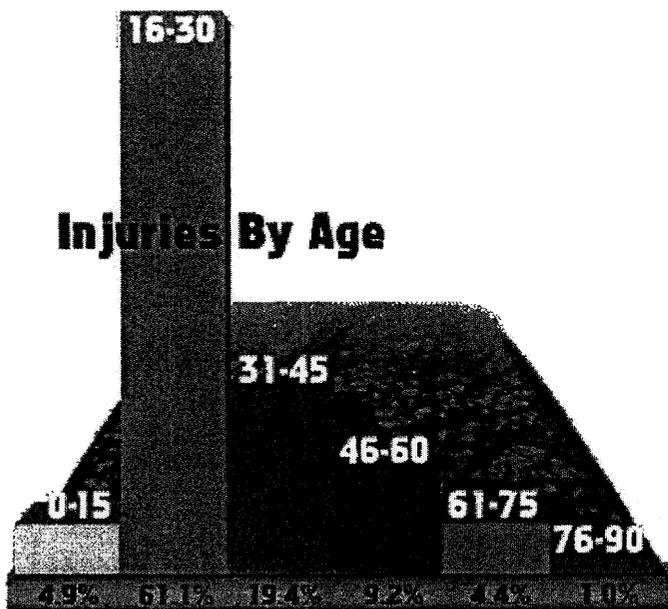


**Falls.** Those most commonly affected are the young (under 16) and the old (over 45).



**Sporting accidents.** The majority of these are diving, although there have been reports SCI occurring in many sports such as football, horseback riding, and other activities.

## Age Ranges and Gender Distribution



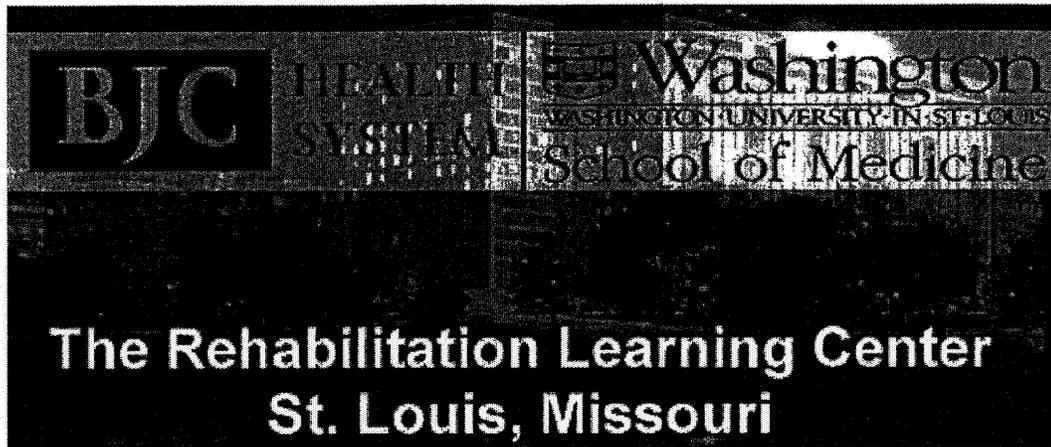
More than 89% of people with Spinal Cord Injury are of working age. The average age at injury is 28 with half occurring to those under 25. 19 is the most common age. Approximately 80% of people with

SCI are males, who are more likely to take risks. SCI occurs most commonly in young males age 16-25. Recent data suggests that one of the most rapidly increasing groups with SCI are men aged 35-45.

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