

# Psychiatric Impairment Rating Scale

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*The Last Ten Years  
&  
The Next Ten Years*

*J.Parmegiani  
21 October 2009*

# PIRS – Talk Summary

- Brief History
- Empirical Studies
  - WorkCover NSW
  - Dr G. Davies
  - Chambers Medical Specialists
- Future Directions
- The e-PIRS

# PIRS – Brief History

- Developed in 1999 at the request of the NSW Motor Accidents Authority –
  - No AMA IV Guides method available
  - 10% WPI Threshold needed – Substantial WPI
  - Equivalent to physical impairment
  - Suitable for a compensation system
  - No time to conduct research
  - Existing methods
    - Little research in medicolegal setting
    - Users dissatisfied (ie No face validity)

# **PIRS – Brief History**

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## **NSW Motor Accidents Compensation Act**

Proclaimed on 5 October 1999

# PIRS – Brief History

- Tasmania Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation Act - 1 July 2001
- NSW Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998- WorkCover Guides – 1 December 2001
- Queensland Civil Liability Regulation 2003 (from 2 December 2002)
- Western Australia Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981- Workcover Guides November 2005
- US - AMA Guides 6<sup>th</sup> Edition Dec 2007

# PIRS – Brief History

Literature suggesting adoption of PIRS  
- South Korea

**Developing Korean Academy of Medical Sciences  
Guideline for Rating the Impairment in Mental and  
Behavioral Disorders; A Comparative Study of  
KNPA's New Guidelines and AMA's 6th Guides**

*Seong Gon Ryu - Korean Med Sci. 2009 May; 24(Suppl 2): S338–S342.*

# PIRS – Brief History

Literature suggesting adoption of PIRS  
-Argentina

**Reflexiones sobre la Ley 34/2003 (2). Valoración de la tabla psiquiátrica.** *Commentaries on the Spanish Law 34/2003 (2). Evaluation of the psychiatric chart.*

*G. Portero<sup>1</sup> y PM. Garamend<sup>2</sup> – Cuad. med. forense n.37 Sevilla jul. 2004*

**Propuestas para baremo de las secuelas psíquicas derivadas de accidente de circulación.** *Proposals for scale of psychic sequels derived from traffic accidents.*

*Villarejo Ramos<sup>1</sup> - Cuad. med. forense n.41 Sevilla jul. 2005*

# PIRS – Brief History

Actividades de la vida diaria:

1. Autocuidado e higiene personal
2. Actividades sociales y recreativas
3. Desplazamientos
4. Funcionamiento social
5. Concentración
6. Adaptación



# PIRS – Brief History

The Median Method – Is it useful?

Measures PERVASIVENESS

Example A - 1,1,2,2,4,5 M=2 A=15, WPI = 8%

Example B - 2,2,2,3,3,3 M=3 A=15, WPI = 15%

Low impairment in multiple areas more significant than high impairment in few areas.

# PIRS – Brief History

The Median Method – Is it useful?

Makes assessors work harder

Example A - 1,1,2,2,3,3 M=2 A=12 WPI = 6%

Example B - 1,1,2,3,3,3 M=3 A=13 WPI = 11%

The assessor will need to give detailed descriptors for the two classes which form the median.

# PIRS – Brief History

The Median Method – Is it useful?

Less arguments between parties

Example A - 1,1,2,2,3,3 M=2 A=12 WPI = 6%

Example B - 1,1,2,3,3,3 M=3 A=13 WPI = 11%

If we use a linear scale, and a threshold of 12, the parties will argue about the rating on every area of function. It will be easy to argue a Class 1 is actually a Class 2, and vice versa.

## Benefits payable for permanent injuries received on or after 1 January 2007

(Notes 10 & 11) (Section 66 of the *Workers Compensation Act 1987*)

Maximum amount payable for multiple injuries (Note 12)						\$220,000	
Maximum amount payable for spinal impairment (see Notes 10 & 11)						\$231,000	
Degree of permanent impairment		Degree of permanent impairment		Degree of permanent impairment		Degree of permanent impairment	
	Benefit		Benefit		Benefit		Benefit
0%	\$0	19%	\$28,600	38%	\$79,750	57%	\$150,700
1%	\$1,375	20%	\$30,250	39%	\$82,500	58%	\$154,550
2%	\$2,750	21%	\$33,000	40%	\$85,250	59%	\$158,400
3%	\$4,125	22%	\$35,750	41%	\$89,100	60%	\$162,250
4%	\$5,500	23%	\$38,500	42%	\$92,950	61%	\$166,100
5%	\$6,875	24%	\$41,250	43%	\$96,800	62%	\$169,950
6%	\$8,250	25%	\$44,000	44%	\$100,650	63%	\$173,800
7%	\$9,625	26%	\$46,750	45%	\$104,500	64%	\$177,650
8%	\$11,000	27%	\$49,500	46%	\$108,350	65%	\$181,500
9%	\$12,375	28%	\$52,250	47%	\$112,200	66%	\$185,350
10%	\$13,750	29%	\$55,000	48%	\$116,050	67%	\$189,200
11%	\$15,400	30%	\$57,750	49%	\$119,900	68%	\$193,050
12%	\$17,050	31%	\$60,500	50%	\$123,750	69%	\$196,900
13%	\$18,700	32%	\$63,250	51%	\$127,600	70%	\$200,750
14%	\$20,350	33%	\$66,000	52%	\$131,450	71%	\$204,600
15%	\$22,000	34%	\$68,750	53%	\$135,300	72%	\$208,450
16%	\$23,650	35%	\$71,500	54%	\$139,150	73%	\$212,300
17%	\$25,300	36%	\$74,250	55%	\$143,000	74%	\$216,150
18%	\$26,950	37%	\$77,000	56%	\$146,850	75% and over	\$220,000

# PIRS- Research

*“There are, in fact, two things, science and opinion;  
The former begets knowledge, the latter ignorance.”*

Hippocrates of Cos

# PIRS- Research

## Recommendation 17

**“That WorkCover should consider the recommendations of the research project (overseen by a reference group including representatives of psychiatrists and psychologists) that has been established under the auspices of the Heads of Workers Compensation Authorities to support the introduction of a universal scale for the measurement of permanent impairment arising from psychiatric or psychological disorders.”**

# PIRS- Research

Basically, little research in ten years

- UNE Study of different scales: Discontinued
- Gordon Davies Study:
  - 148 patients
  - Conclusions: The PIRS is a valid scale for ordering the severity of psychological disability but it measures disability rather than impairment. The form of scoring does not provide a proportionate or statistically meaningful measure.

# PIRS- Research

Estimated number of PIRS assessments in NSW since 2000 (MAA and Workcover claims only)

8,000 MAA Psych claims + 24,000 WC Psych claims

= 32,000 Psychiatric Claims

64,000 reports and PIRS assessments

Cost at \$1200 per report = \$77M



# PIRS- Research

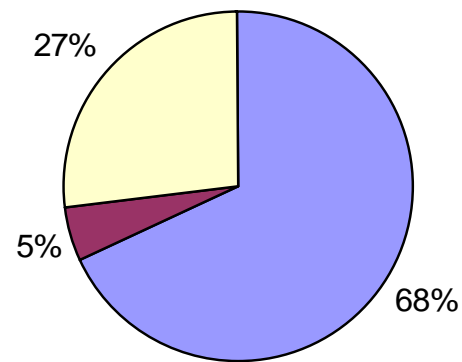
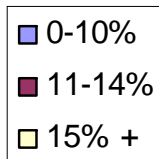
Chambers Medical Specialists

566 cases – All assessors, all referrers

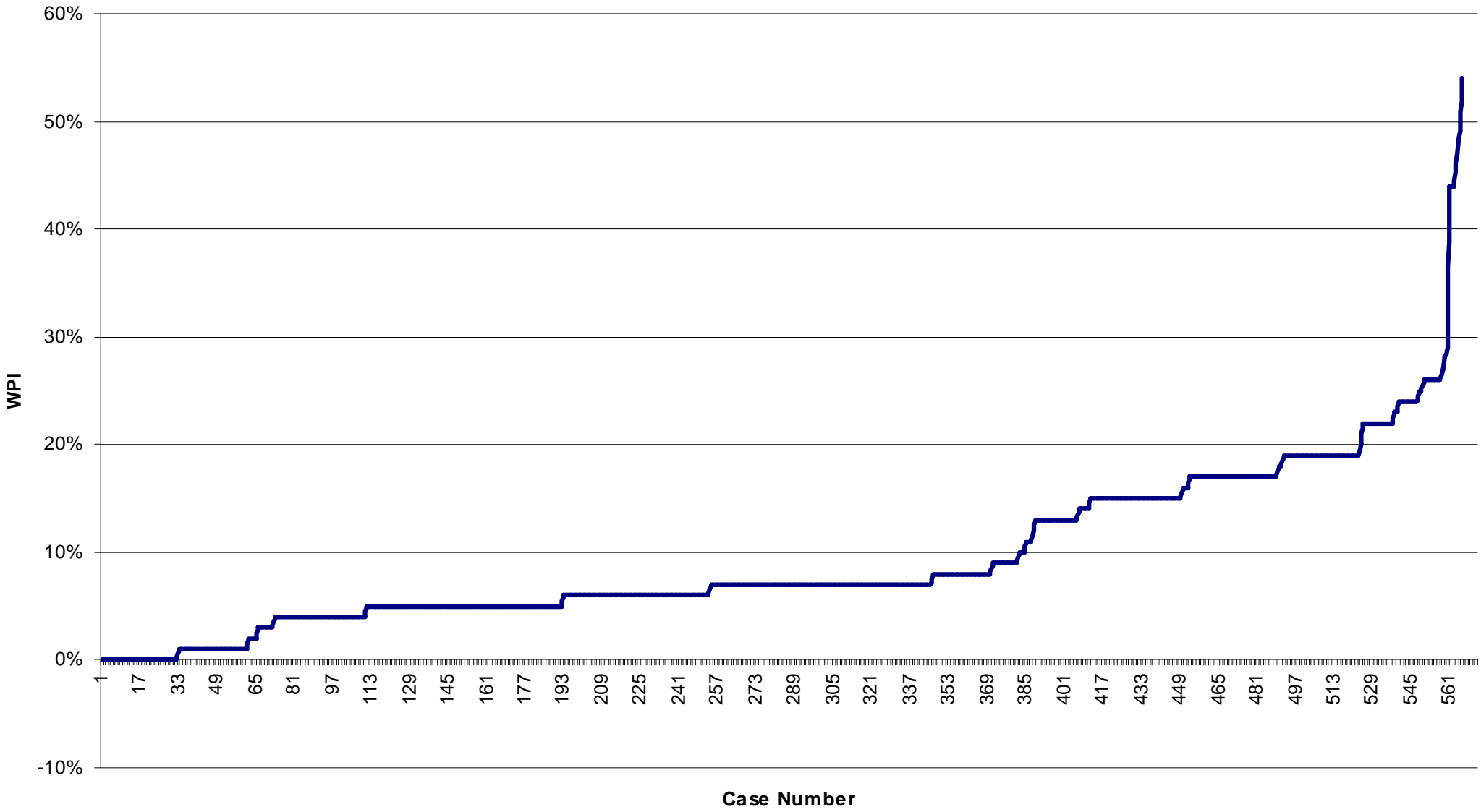
- Not >10% = 68%
- >10% = 32%
- = or > 15% = 27%

# PIRS- Research

PIRS WPI



# PIRS WPI



# PIRS- Research

	ALL (566)	IME 1 (164)	IME 2 (251)	IME 3 (117)
Not >10%	= 68%	63%	70%	65%
>10%	= 32%	37%	30%	35%
= or > 15%	= 27%	30%	28%	27%

# PIRS- Research

MAS Referrals – 140 disputes

- Not greater than 10% = 88%
- Greater than 10% = 12%

Are these really disputes?

# PIRS- Research

WCC Referrals – 114 disputes

- Less than 15% = 48%
- Equal or greater than 15% = 52%

These look like genuine disputes.

# PIRS- Research

## Plaintiff solicitors

- Not >10% = 67%
- >10% = 33%
- = or > 15% = 31%

# PIRS- Research

## Insurance solicitors

- Not >10% = 75%
- >10% = 25%
- = or > 15% = 19%



# PIRS- Research

## Reliability studies

- Interrater reliability
- Test & re-test

## Validity studies

- Face validity - tick
- Long term follow up
- Other scales

# PIRS- The Future

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WPI ratings are based on function, so do we really need a psychiatric assessment if impairment is a long way below a legislated threshold?

# PIRS- The Future

## E-PIRS

Now online at [www.pirs.com.au](http://www.pirs.com.au)

- Self administered questionnaire
- 50+ questions
- Takes 10-20 minutes
- Automatically scored, and full report emailed to referrer
- Inexpensive