Psychiatric Impairment Rating Scale

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

NSW Motor Accidents Compensation Act

Proclaimed on 5 October 1999
PIRS – Brief History

- Tasmania Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation Act - 1 July 2001
- Queensland Civil Liability Regulation 2003 (from 2 December 2002)
- Western Australia Workers’ Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981- Workcover Guides November 2005
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

PIRS – Brief History

Literature suggesting adoption of PIRS
-Argentina

G. Portero¹ y PM. Garamendi² – 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 Ramos¹· 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.
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*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of permanent impairment</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Degree of permanent impairment</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
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<td>$0</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<td>16%</td>
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<td>$143,000</td>
<td>74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>18%</td>
<td>$26,950</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>$77,000</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>$146,850</td>
<td>75% and over</td>
<td>$220,000</td>
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</table>
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.”

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 1, Report 22 – September 2002
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.
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

- 0-10%: 68%
- 11-14%: 27%
- 15%+: 5%

[Pie chart showing the distribution of PIRS WPI categories]
## PIRS- Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALL (566)</th>
<th>IME 1 (164)</th>
<th>IME 2 (251)</th>
<th>IME 3 (117)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not &gt;10%</td>
<td>= 68%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<td>= 32%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= or &gt;15%</td>
<td>= 27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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%
- $\leq 15\%$ = 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

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

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