

Classification System for Chronic Pain in SCI

Adapted from Cardenas DD et al. Classification of chronic pain associated with spinal cord injuries, Arch Phys Med Rehabil, 83: 1708-14, 2002; Table 2. Used with permission from Elsevier Publishing.

Pain categorization is performed by first comparing the pain location and distribution with the subject's level of injury. This information is combined with a classification of chronic SCI pain that uses a matrix that compares the type of pain with location and with the effects of activity, position, and light touch on pain (see table below). If the pain does not seem to fit a specific category on the basis of the information, the subject's self-reported source of pain (musculoskeletal or nervous system) and pain exacerbators are used to help make the final categorization.

Categorization is outlined in the table below (fill out with +, - or \pm):

Pain Category (major)	Pain Category (Specific)	Location	Related to activity	Affected by position	Worse with light touch
Neuropathic	SCI Pain	Below injury in area without normal sensation			
	Transition zone pain	At level of injury, bilateral			
	Radicular Pain	At any dermatome level, usually unilateral, usually radiates			
	Visceral	In abdomen			
Musculoskeletal	Mechanical spine pain	In back or neck, often bilateral			
	Overuse pain	Often above injury in areas of normal sensation in an incomplete, can be below			

+ yes, - no, \pm maybe