

Complex Regional Pain Syndrome: Prognosis Varies, But Early Diagnosis Can Offer a Chance at Restored Function

Complex Regional Pain Syndrome affects every sufferer differently. It's estimated, however, that 90% of those with a diagnosis of CRPS suffer from Type I, while the remaining 10% suffer from Type II. In our first installment on Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, *CRPS Victims Are Suffering Physically, Financially After Medical Malpractice* we offered insight on exactly what CRPS is, and how victims of medical malpractice may have grounds for a lawsuit if a medical professional is found to be negligent in caring for them.

As a refresher course from our first installment, it's important to remember:

CRPS, or Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, is what was formerly known as **RSD**. CRPS is a pain disorder and considered to be permanent, or as medical professionals often refer to it: "chronic". There are several ways a person can develop Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. CRPS can develop because of medical malpractice such as a surgical error or can be sustained from an accident. Regardless of how they developed the condition, it's considered to be one of the most excruciating, permanent afflictions a person can suffer from.

Now that we've established what Complex Regional Pain Syndrome is and how victims' lives are dramatically altered by this excruciating condition, our second installment in our CRPS article series will delve into the diagnosis and prognosis of having to live one's life with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. Our third and final installment of the series will give patients insight and important information on treatments available for this debilitating disease.

Experienced physicians must rely on clinical knowledge, not standardized testing

According to medical professionals with extensive knowledge of the disease expression, there is no specific test that can confirm a CRPS diagnosis. CRPS is what's known as a "diagnosis of exclusion" or a "clinical diagnosis". A clinical diagnosis is made by a qualified physician when there is no standardized medical test available to provide further insight into the patient's condition.

A diagnosis of exclusion can help prevent misdiagnosis

There are several other pain conditions that are made with a diagnosis of exclusion using clinical criteria rather than diagnostic testing. Fibromyalgia, for instance, is a pain condition that is diagnosed by most physicians after touching a patient's "pressure points" and scoring the pain accordingly. This is not a standardized test because every patient will feel pain in a different way. Other illnesses such as Lyme Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, and Fibromyalgia must be ruled out entirely before a diagnosis of CRPS is given. Each of the illnesses mentioned has its own treatment and confusing one for the other could be considered misdiagnosis in certain situations.

The same idea is applied to a diagnosis of CRPS. Largely, the diagnosis is achieved by looking at a patient's medical history and taking their signs and symptoms into account and a diagnosis of CRPS Type-I will be made. When a patient has a clearly defined injury to the affected nerve (trauma from an accident), a diagnosis of CRPS Type-II is made.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is ordered in certain cases to confirm a doctor's clinical diagnosis of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. This is because bone reabsorption is a common co-morbidity (*often found*

to exist in) of CRPS. Bone reabsorption is a condition in which the cells break down the bones and release excess calcium into the bloodstream. However, this finding is found in other illnesses too.

A Complex Regional Pain Syndrome prognosis can vary, but isn't as bleak as it once was

There are several factors that should be considered when a physician offers a patient suffering from CRPS a prognosis for this illness. Younger people such as children and adolescents have a better chance of restoration of function. Older people, and those injured in accidents who may have suffered other injuries in conjunction with CRPS, have a less favorable prognosis.

Unfortunately, there are patients who suffer severe, chronic pain for the rest of their lives after an injury that results in Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. In these cases, it's important for the victim to seek experienced legal counsel in the event that their CRPS was caused by a negligent doctor who has left them in agony.

In the third and final installation of our CRPS series here on the Shaked Law Blog, we'll take a closer look at what treatments are available for those who are found to be suffering lifelong, chronic pain due to CRPS. It's important for victims of medical malpractice to know they should never suffer in silence, and that an attorney experienced in CRPS-related cases is there to help them. An experienced attorney can obtain the compensation a victim deserves, thusly allowing them the financial stability to afford proper treatment.

Contact us to schedule a complimentary consultation. There's no obligation. Take the first step and call today: (877). 529-0080



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