USE OF THE AMA GUIDES
FOR THE EVALUATION OF IMPAIRMENT IN THE UPPER EXTREMITY

RICHARD M. BRAUN, M.D.
CURRENT CONTROVERSIES

ALMAREZ- GUZMAN II

“THE BURDEN OF REBUITING A SCHEDULED PERMANENT DISABILITY RATING RESTES WITH THE PARTY DISPUTUING IT”!
THE REBUTTAL … “MUST BE BASED ON THE GUIDES AND DOES NOT MANDATE THAT A WCJ OR APPEALS BOARD PANEL MUST ADMIT OR FOLLOW ANY REBUTTAL EVIDENCE PRESENTED”
CURRENT CONTROVERSIES
ALMAREZ- GUZMAN II

- STATE THE DEGREE OF IMPAIRMENT USING ESTABLISHED METHODS
- STATE WHY YOU BELIEVE THIS IS INAPPROPRIATE FOR THIS CASE
- STATE YOUR BEST ESTIMATE OF THE REAL IMPAIRMENT THAT IS PRESENT
- STATE WHY YOU BELIEVE THAT YOUR DECISION IS CORRECT AND REASONABLE AND ADDRESSED IN THE GUIDES
THE AMA GUIDES: IMPAIRMENT IN THE UPPER LIMB

MAJOR AREAS OF IMPAIRMENT

• ABSENCE OF BODY PARTS
• LOSS OF RANGE OF MOTION
• NEUROLOGICAL IMPAIRMENT
  ➢ SENSORY / MOTOR
  ➢ STRENGTH LOSS
SECONDARY AREAS AND SYSTEMS

- CIRCULATORY SYSTEM
- STRENGTH EVALUATION
- JOINT STABILITY
- INFLAMMATION
- PAIN / RSD-CRPS
INDUSTRIAL INJURIES
EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT

MULTIPLE FACTORS OF IMPAIRMENT IN A SINGLE BODY PART

SHOULDER IMPINGEMENT POST ARTHROSCPIC DECOMPRESSION

RANGE OF MOTION FIG 16-40/46
RESECTION ARTHROPLASTY TABLE 16-27
STRENGTH LOSS TABLE 16-35 COMBINE
MULTIPLE FACTORS OF IMPAIRMENT IN A SINGLE BODY PART

SHOULDER / POST OP S.A.D.
RANGE / ARTHROPLASTY / STRENGTH

COMBINE

CONVERT UPPER EXTREMITY TO
WHOLE PERSON IMPAIRMENT
INDUSTRIAL INJURIES
EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT

SHOULDER POST OP SAD

RANGE LOSS – FLEX + EXT + ABD … 11% UE

ARTHROPLASTY– Pg. 506 TABLE 10% UE

STRENGTH LOSS – AB + EXT ETC. 9% UE

COMBINE 11% WITH 10% = 20 %

COMBINE 20 % WITH 9% = 27%

27% UE = 16% WHOLE PERSON
CASE:

DT is a 39 year old women with neck and bilateral arm pain. She has worked for many years in a job that requires overhead reaching.

She has measured pulse loss and impaired perfusion (O₂ SAT↓) with overhead work.
IMPAIRMENT DUE TO VASCULAR DISORDERS

TABLE 16-17, Page 498

CLASS I DISORDER / INTERMITTANT

SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH 90° ARM ELEVATION

0-9% IMPAIRMENT UPPER EXTREMITY AVAILABLE

5% SELECTED

TABLE 16-17 PAGE 498
ESTABLISH FOUNDATION:

1. STRENGTH LOSS CONSTITUTES AN IMPAIRMENT NOT CONSIDERED (RARE CASE OBJECTIVE DEFECT)

2. COMBINE WITH OTHER IMPAIRMENTS

3. ABSENCE OF REDUCED MOTION PAINFUL CONDITION, DEFORMITY LOSS OF BODY PARTS
INDUSTRIAL INJURIES
EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT

45 YO. TRUCK DRIVER’S ARM CAUGHT UNDER THE BED OF A DUMP TRUCK

- RANGE OF MOTION SHOULDER AND ELBOW ARE NORMAL
- PAIN IS MILD, AN ANNOYANCE
- WEAKNESS WHEN HE ATTEMPTS LIFTING, GRIP, PUSH-PULL

30 % UE IMPAIRMENT
OTHER FACTORS OF IMPAIRMENT

GRIP LOSS (DUE TO QUADRIGIA)

CRITERIA:

• RARE CASE / IMPAIRING FACTORS NOT CONSIDERED ADEQUATELY IN GUIDES

• EXAMINER CAN COMBINE FACTORS

• NO ALLOWANCE IF DECREASED MOTION, PAIN, DEFORMITY LOSS OF PARTS THAT PREVENT APPLICATION OF MAX FORCE

CHAPTER 16 ¶ 116.8a, pg. 508
WHAT IS QUADRIGIA?
HOW DOES THAT FIT CRITERIA?

• DEFINE / EXPLAIN JM GRIP 71/90

• CRITERIA: RARE CASE / NOT COVERED COMBINED IMPAIRMENTS ABILITY TO USE GRIP METER

• USE UNINJURED SIDE AS CONTROL

REF: CH. 1, pg. 2, ¶ 1.2
INDUSTRIAL INJURIES
EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT

WEAKNESS SECONDARY TO QUADRIQIA

QUADRIQIA: (CH 16, ¶ 16.8 pg.508 AMA Guides, 5th ed.)

1. STRENGTH LOSS HAS NOT BEEN ADDRESSED BY OTHER METHODS IN THE GUIDES

2. STRENGTH LOSS / OTHER IMPAIRMENTS COULD BE COMBINED WITH OTHERS

3. NO ASSOCIATED MOTIONS, DEFORMITY, PAIN
GRIP LOSS
(CAN USE NORMAL SIDE AS CONTROL)

71 LBS MEASURED/ 81 LBS ANTICIPATED
12.35% LOSS

TABLE 16-34 P509 CONVERTS TO 10% UPPER EXTREMITY

10% UE CAN BE COMBINED

TABLE P604
14% UE COMBINED WITH 10% UE

23% FINAL UPPER EXTREMITY IMPAIRMENT
CURRENT CONTROVERSIES
ALMAREZ- GUZMAN II

• EXAMPLES