

Physician Experience in Treating Workers' Compensation Injuries - Does Practice Make Perfect?

**California Research Colloquium on
Workers' Compensation Medical Delivery
& Return To Work
May 1-2, 2003**

**Alex Swedlow
California Workers' Compensation Institute
www.cwci.org**

Characteristics of Efficient Medical Delivery Systems

1. Collaboration between patient, provider and payor;
2. Focus on quality of care;
3. Comprehensive unit price & utilization controls;
4. Experienced and well trained providers.

Characteristics of California Workers Comp Medical Delivery System

Efficient Medical Delivery Systems	California Workers Compensation
Collaboration between patient, provider and payor	Suboptimal collaboration
Focus on quality of care	Significant variability of care
Comprehensive unit price & utilization controls	Inadequate fee schedule & utilization controls
Experienced and well trained providers	Experienced providers?

Exhibit 3

Physician Experience in Workers' Compensation & Volume-Based Outcomes

Is Experience & Patient Volume Relevant?

- Lessons from Group Health
 - Clinical literature
 - ✓ Selective Referral
 - ✓ Practice-Makes-Perfect
 - Improving outcomes
- Workers' Comp Physician Experience Profile

Exhibit 4

Physician Experience in Workers' Compensation & Volume-Based Outcomes

Profile Workers' Comp Physician Experience

Data compiled from ICIS

- DOI: Jan 1993 – Dec 2000
- 40k Providers; 1.1 Million Injuries
- Construct Experience Categories

Analyze

- Provider characteristics
- Distribution of experience
- Associations between experience & outcomes

Exhibit 5

Physician Experience & Volume-Based Outcomes

Distribution of Provider Experience

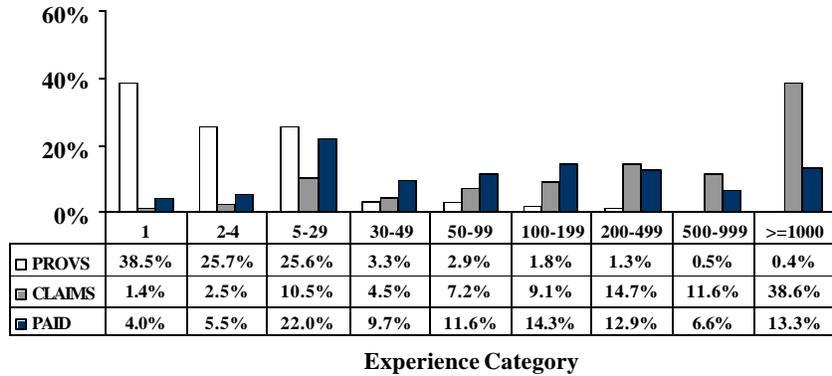
Experience Category	Providers		Claims		
	TAXIDs	Pcnt	N	Pcnt	Claims/Yr
1	15,129	38.5%	15,129	1.4%	0.1
2-4	10,090	25.7%	27,078	2.5%	0.3
5-29	10,039	25.6%	115,704	10.5%	1.4
30-49	1,290	3.3%	49,599	4.5%	4.8
50-99	1,132	2.9%	79,371	7.2%	8.8
100-199	710	1.8%	99,682	9.1%	17.5
200-499	516	1.3%	161,164	14.7%	39.0
500-999	182	0.5%	126,889	11.6%	87.1
>=1000	160	0.4%	423,829	38.6%	331.1
Grand Total	39,248	100%	1,098,445	100%	3.5

Source: CWCI 2003

Exhibit 6

Physician Experience & Volume-Based Outcomes

Percentages of Providers, Claims & Total Benefits Paid by Experience Category

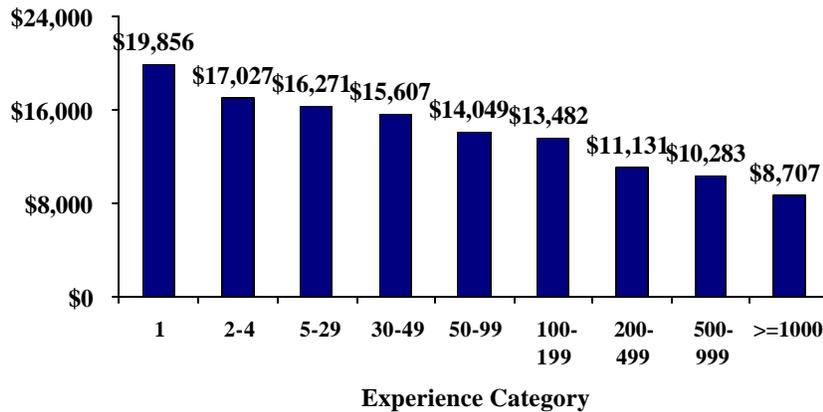


Source: CWCI 2003

Exhibit 7

Physician Experience & Volume-Based Outcomes

Average Cost Per Claim



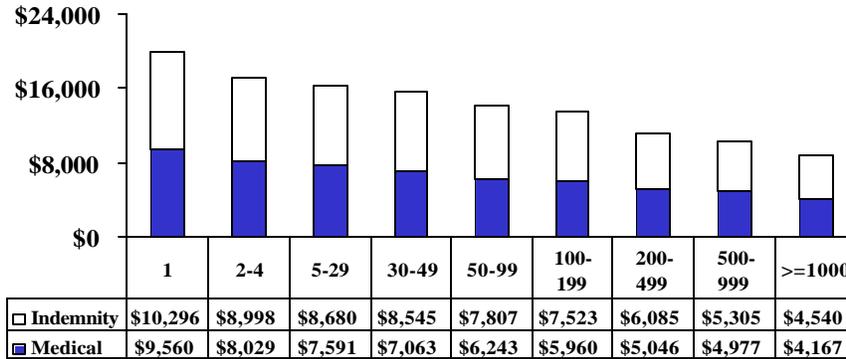
All values are case-mix adjusted for employer, employee and other characteristics

Source: CWCI 2003

Exhibit 8

Physician Experience & Volume-Based Outcomes

Average Medical & Indemnity Cost Per Claim



Experience Category

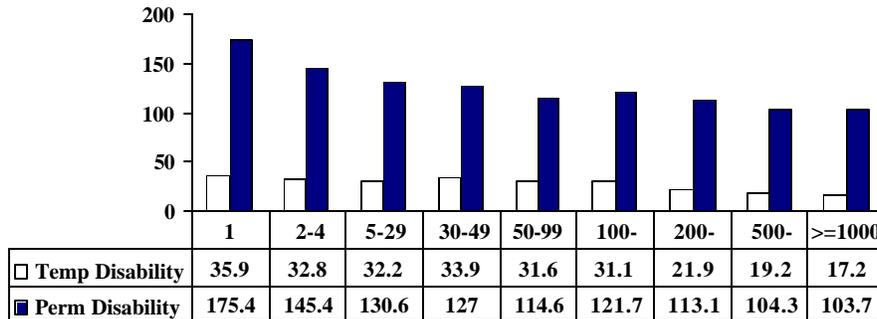
All values are case-mix adjusted for employer, employee and other characteristics

Source: CWCI 2003

Exhibit 9

Physician Experience & Volume-Based Outcomes

Length of Disability Temporary and Permanent Disability Claims



Experience Category

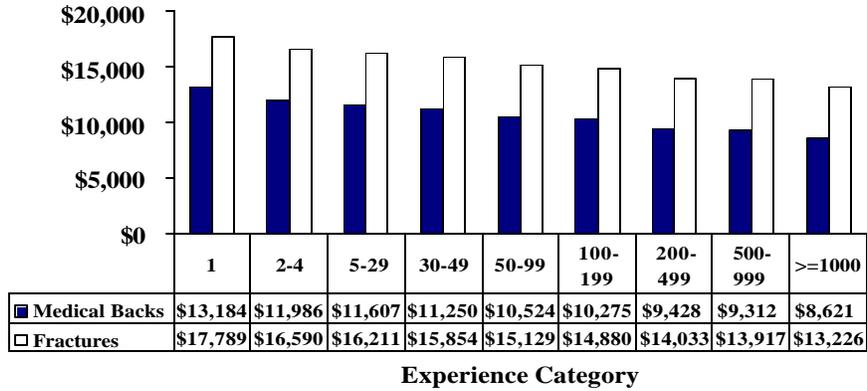
Length of Disability = temporary disability paid days

Source: CWCI 2003

Exhibit 10

Physician Experience & Volume-Based Outcomes

Back Injury (w/o Spinal Cord Inv) & Fractures (Extremities)

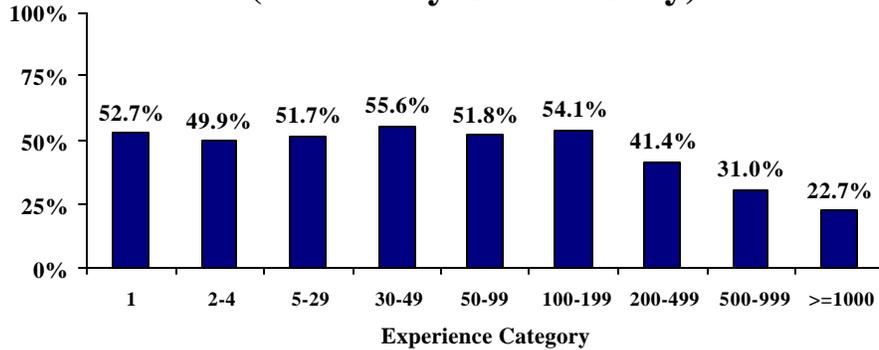


Source: CWCI 2003

Exhibit 11

Physician Experience & Volume-Based Outcomes

Attorney Involvement Rate (Indemnity Claims Only)



Source: CWCI 2003

Exhibit 12

Physician Experience & Volume-Based Outcomes: Summary

- 9 out of 10 providers treat less than 1 WC claim per year
- Comparisons between most experienced and least experienced:
 - ✓ Average cost per case 56% lower
 - ✓ 58% lower levels of attorney involvement
 - ✓ Significantly fewer indemnity claims
 - ✓ 41% shorter TD duration

Exhibit 13

Physician Experience & Volume-Based Outcomes

System Improvements – Examples from Group Health:

- Collaboration
- Focus on quality of care
- Data collection & analysis
- Reporting & “Scorecard” distribution

Exhibit 14

Physician Experience & Volume-Based Outcomes

Discussion

Differences between Group Health and WC systems

- More than paperwork

WC System has few tools to compensate for lack of experience:

- No community standards
- Lack of decision support systems
- No published scorecards

Long-term effects of Presumption & Minniear?

Public Policy Issues: AB 749 & AB 1483

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