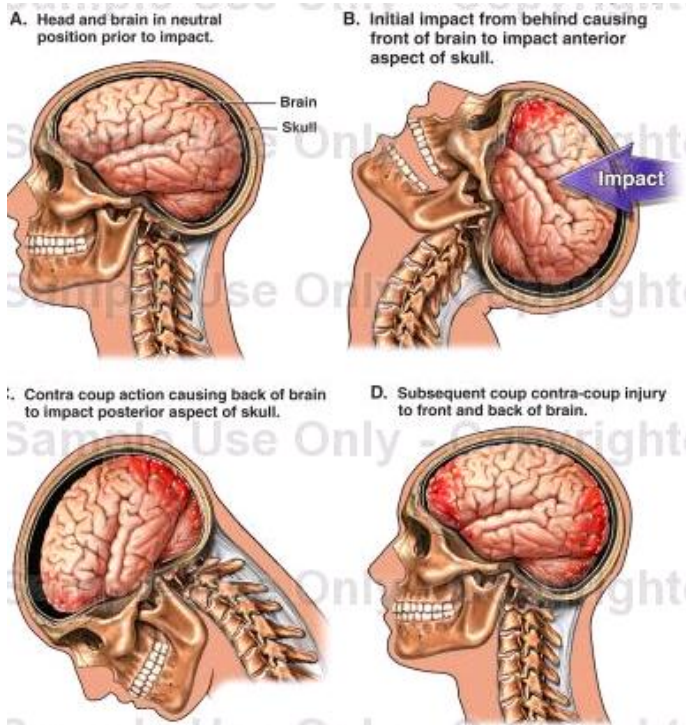


Medical-Legal Report

Trauma Series #11 Whiplash



Whiplash: Another name for whiplash is cervical acceleration-deceleration injury. In this instance, there is a rear impact and the occupant's first motion is up. This is called the ramping effect and is due to the spine pushing against the seat, flattening the spinal curve. This upward motion, in many cases, causes the head to rise above safe levels of the head-rest. The neck-head fully extends past its normal limits, tearing ligaments and discs (herniations-see Trauma Series #6.) The head then "whips" forward while the brain is still going backwards, due to the fluid area in the back of the brain, and the brain hits the back of the skull. This can cause bleeding in the brain or hematoma. The neck-head then goes past its normal forward limits, tears ligaments and discs (herniations), then "whips" back once more, with the brain hitting the front of the skull. The damage to

the brain is called a "Coup-Contrecoup Injury," and can cause bleeding in the brain. The whiplash mechanism, which is often taken lightly, usually causes serious pathology, such as herniations, bleeding and tearing of tissue, that are permanent conditions. In many cases, whiplash can be caused from a single vehicle, no damage, accident.

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