

Medical-Legal Report

Trauma Series #18

Steering Wheels Injuries

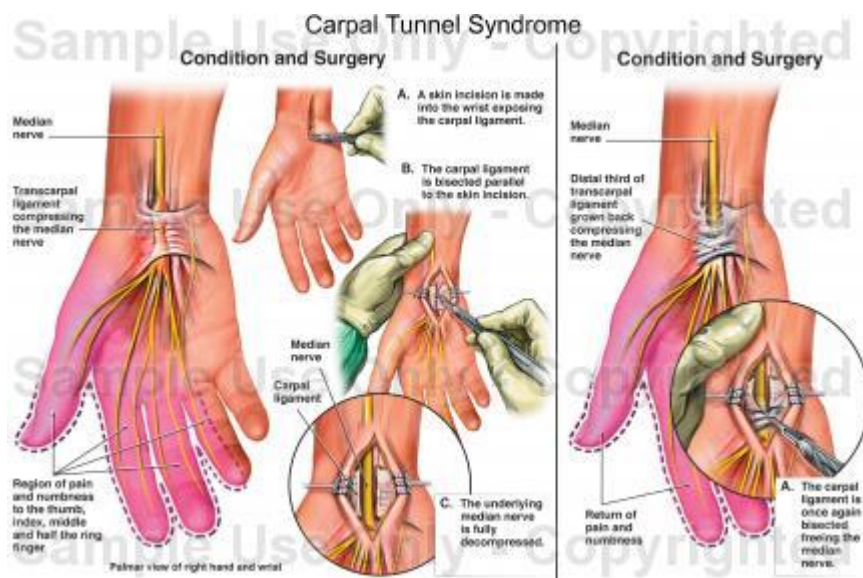


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In automobile accidents, the steering wheel can be considered a “blunt instrument” that can create bodily injury. The one thing in common for virtually every driver is that they are holding onto the steering wheel during an accident, leaving their hands and wrists exposed to injury. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) is one of the most common steering wheel injuries. Conservative care is

indicated as soon as possible, often with favorable outcomes, yet many victims are left with permanent loss of function, even if treated. In Trauma Series #5, CTS is examined in detail, explaining that the median nerve is entrapped by the overstretched transcarpal ligament. In *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and Motor Vehicle Accidents*, by Ames, E.L. (1996), it is concluded that **“Symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome developed in 96 patients within 2 months after an automobile accident. Forty-four (46%) of these 96 patients underwent carpal tunnel release [surgery]”** (p. 223).

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