



Introducing Health Sciences : Trauma, Repair and Recovery

Motorcycle Accident

Man

The accident was on July the 23rd 2004, about half past twelve, I remember it really well, and the funny thing was that a couple of weeks before that Jackie and I had been on holiday to Turkey, and I'd said to her I thought this is fantastic, and I said life doesn't get much better than this and then, of course, about two weeks after that was when I had the accident and what happened was that I was riding the motor bike down the M1 and I went into the back of a car that, of the three brake lights only one was working, it was very sunny, I didn't see the middle brake light come on and I went into the back of him, and went across the road on my knees and hit by the lorry.

Physically I broke my back in two places, or fractured my back in two places, broke my neck, broke my shoulder, the actual shoulder blade, no sorry not the shoulder blade, the actual, yeah I think it was the shoulder blade that got broken, and took the skin off both my knees so I had to have skin grafts on both my knees, and dislocated my finger, which is still dislocated and is set now.

The worst thing for me I was hit by the lorry. My brain had taken such a rattle and when all the bleeding and swelling had gone down that was when I really didn't know who I was or where I was, and some of the gibberish that I talked to Jackie whatever, and some of the things I've written down or whatever, we still have, were just complete gibberish and gobbledegook. I was in hospital in London for about four months, and then I came to Milton Keynes for about two months, and then I went to Aylesbury to rehabilitate because they didn't know how I was going to be and whether I was going to be really bad tempered all the while.

The broken back I had two metal plates put in my back and then basically screwed to my spine and all sorts of things over which way. My neck they just left as it was, and also my shoulder because there's nothing they can do to the shoulder blade they just left it, they didn't even tell me that I'd got a broken shoulder until I was saying I was really sore, I can't lay on this side, and they said to Jackie oh yeah, you broke that shoulder, it's like oh, so but, so they, and I had skin grafts on my knees that they, I had bandages round those so, and on my, so I had the plates in my back but then I had quite a big scar down the middle of my back, which obviously I couldn't see and at the time I didn't really know about, but strangely enough they weren't quite sure how bad the injury was going to be, and they didn't know whether I'd be able to walk again, and I was obviously out there with the fairies and the only way they knew that I was going to be able to walk again was when I got up one day.

The skin grafts on my knees took probably a good six months to heal and I'm still very nervous about obviously kneeling down, or going on them in any way because there's no fat, it's just skin and bone. Then my back I've still got nerve problems in my back, so the scar healed up fairly quickly but as of January this year I had the metal taken out because there was a 70% chance that the nerves would, well there was a 70% chance that the metal in my back was, you know, basically disturbing the nerves but, so they took it out, and the surgeon actually tidied up the scar that I had originally on my back, but unfortunately it didn't heal the nerve trouble so, or it hasn't, although that was only six months ago, so I'm hoping that it's still early days.

If people come up to me and tap me on the back, you know it really hurts and it, you know, it feels like they've stabbed me. Sitting in a chair or laying on my back is not so much painful because I've got used to it now but I can always feel it, and it's just a bit of a nightmare to be quite honest. There are times when you're thinking like oh, do I have to be like this every day

for the rest of my life, and then there are other times when you just forget about it because I've got so used to it.

What's still affecting me now is apart from the sore back and the no skin on my knees it's the mental things that are affecting me which are really terrible memory and fatigue, because a lot of people think tiredness is physical, but it needn't be. Now, for example after we've, you know, talked now I'll probably have to have a lay down this afternoon, just simply because my brain is completely worn out, or might not be, but that's by far the worst thing and that's the reason why after three years on I'm not back to work because I was originally thinking, my old boss came to see me in hospital, you know a couple of months after the accident, and I was saying oh don't worry, I'll be back to work by Christmas, you know, I set myself, you know, January the first I'll be back to work and whatever, that was you know two-and-a-half years ago, and the way that things are going at the moment I certainly won't be able to go back to doing the job that I was doing.

If you look at me physically, well if I'm standing there with my shorts on, you wouldn't know that I'd got any sort of injury at all, and I say it often but 50% of the time talking to me you wouldn't think that there's anything wrong with me, but a lot of people when you go out they don't see the time when you're at home, and they when you're sitting there and oh god, can hardly move, and of course you know I get tired and irritable, and completely zombified, and that's one of the worst things about having a head injury, or it's a brain injury, is that it's a hidden injury, completely hidden.

So life I think has changed, I mean it's changed massively financially because I was a salesman in the past, I used to earn a lot of my wages as commission so, but now I don't so that's changed an awful lot. But I think you get used to, well I'm used to now what I've got and rather than what I had, so it puts things into perspective a lot.