

**RESEARCH PROGRAM**

Research Project Details	
Title	Ankle Stiffness after Malleolar Fracture: A Study of Incidence and Predictive Factors
Investigator(s)	M. Elizabeth Pedersen, University of Alberta
Funding Period	August 2013 – December 2017
Budget	\$35,405
Issue/Rationale	<p>As little is known about ankle stiffness, it is not currently possible to develop evidence-based treatment protocols to prevent or treat ankle stiffness. Our study will assist in the identification of those at risk for ankle stiffness. Through early identification and management of ankle stiffness following ankle fracture, we may then be able to reduce the current heterogeneity of time to recovery and return to work. As no previous study has examined the impact of WCB status on outcomes, this study will also provide additional information regarding this sub-group of patients.</p>
Objective(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To determine the incidence of ankle stiffness at a) six months and b) one year after malleolar fractures of the ankle in a cohort of 200 individuals who undergo surgical fixation of a malleolar ankle fracture.</li><li>• To identify factors associated with the development of ankle stiffness including a) WCB status, b) patient factors, c) fracture factors, and d) treatment factors.</li><li>• To determine if there are differences in the a) number of patients who return to full activity or work and b) the time required to return to work or activity between patients with and without ankle stiffness.</li></ul>
Anticipated Results/ Impact	<p>The information obtained by this study will be used to educate physicians, allied health care professionals and patients about risk factors for the development of stiffness and provide solutions to mitigate or prevent problems with a stiff ankle post-fracture.</p> <p>No known study has examined WCB status as a prognostic variable for recovery following malleolar ankle fracture. This information will allow for better management of claimants with ankle fracture injuries in the workers' compensation system.</p>
Keywords	Ankle stiffness, malleolar fracture, return to work