Need and use of assistive devices for personal mobility by individuals with spinal cord injury

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To investigate the provision, use, and unmet need of assistive devices for personal mobility in the Swiss population with spinal cord injury (SCI).; Community survey 2012 of the Swiss Spinal Cord Injury Cohort Study.; Individuals aged 16 or older with traumatic or non-traumatic SCI residing in Switzerland.; Not applicable.; Provision, frequency of use, and unmet need (i.e. perceiving the need of a device but it not being provided) of 11 mobility devices were assessed by self-report and analyzed descriptively. Provision of devices was further analyzed by sex, age, SCI etiology, SCI severity, and time since SCI.; Devices reported highest for provision (N = 492; mean age 55.3 ś 15.1 years; 28.9% female) were adapted cars (78.2%) and manual wheelchairs (69.9%). Provision of various devices markedly varied with age and SCI severity (e.g. 34.6% of those aged 76+ had a walking frame compared to 3.1% of those aged 31-45; 50.0% of participants with complete tetraplegia had a power wheelchair compared to 7.6% of those with complete paraplegia). Many devices were mostly used daily (e.g. manual wheelchair) while others were mostly used less frequently (e.g. handbikes). Unmet need was highest for arm braces (53.2% of those in need) and power assisted wheelchairs (47.3%), and lowest for crutches (11.4%) and manual wheelchairs (4.8%).; The devices individuals have or use is largely dependent on their age and SCI severity. While most participants have access to basic mobility devices, there is still a considerable degree of unmet need for certain devices.

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