The psychological impact of severe hand injury.

Abstract: The final outcome of severe hand injuries is not solely determined by the residual functional impairment, but is also a function of non-functional criteria, including the sequelae of the accompanying psychological trauma. This paper reviews the literature with respect to the psychological impact of severe hand injuries, including the special impact of amputations, adaptation processes, adaptation stages, prognostic criteria and aesthetic issues influencing the final individual outcome, including present recommendations for promoting a positive outcome. Motivated and psychologically stable people are reported to do well irrespective of the severity of a hand injury. In patients who find it difficult to cope mentally, successful treatment strategies have been proposed. Their implementation is in a constant state of evolution and includes not only improved surgical techniques and advanced pharmacological pain management but also early psychotherapeutic input and involvement of patients in decision making for treatment.

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