

Redefining Trauma through Advanced Patient Care

Regional Level 1 Trauma Center at UC San Diego Health System

Car crashes, terrible accidents, heartbreaking acts of violence... Every day, we read these disturbing stories in the paper and see the graphic images on the evening news. We understand that people have been hurt, that an injury has been suffered. But what we rarely grasp is that trauma is a disease like any other — and like any other, it can be prevented.



Raul Coimbra, MD, PhD

"The common perception is that trauma is a random event, something that cannot be foreseen or avoided," said Raul Coimbra, MD, PhD, Division Chief of UC San Diego Health System's Trauma, Surgical Critical Care and Burn Unit. "Trauma, however, is a disease and should be treated as such."

In fact, trauma is the leading cause of death for all individuals between the ages of 8 and 45. What's more, for every individual who loses his life to trauma, up to six additional people will become permanently disabled from the disease.

"Trauma is not just something that happens to other people," Dr. Coimbra said. "It's not just a paragraph in a police report. Trauma is a disease that could affect anyone, but more importantly, it is something that we can all prevent."

The unfortunate truth is that most injuries are accompanied by the use of alcohol or drugs. "Drinking and driving, violence, drug-induced accidents — all too often, patients end up in the Trauma Center when their accidents could have been prevented through increased personal responsibility," said Dr. Coimbra. "We simply cannot stress the importance of trauma prevention enough."

When trauma strikes, the Regional Level I Trauma Center at UC San Diego Health System is one place that is ready to treat patients' trauma, emergency and critical care needs. The center offers immediate, 24/7 availability of all medical specialties — trauma surgeons and nurses, neurosurgeons, orthopedic, plastic and spine surgeons, and emergency medicine physicians. It consists of a three-bed resuscitation suite, dedicated operating room and is adjacent to the Surgical Intensive Care Unit and blood bank. State-of-the-art technology connects EMS personnel in the field to the trauma teams in the Trauma Resuscitation Room, allowing the two to collaborate on care before the patient even arrives at the Trauma Center as every second counts.

"As one of only two Level 1 Trauma Centers in the region, we are at the forefront of advanced trauma medicine," said Dr. Coimbra. "We provide the most comprehensive approach to this disease, from state-of-the-art patient care to basic scientific research that has led to the development of many breakthrough treatments."

Not only has the team at UC San Diego Health System improved trauma care for residents in San Diego and Imperial counties, but it has also improved the delivery of trauma medicine throughout the world. "What is now considered to be the gold standard for trauma care was developed right here," said Dr. Coimbra. "Now, we are dedicated to advancing trauma medicine on an international level."

"Because we are an academic health system, we practice what we teach," continued Dr. Coimbra. "We deliver high-quality care using innovative technology and generate new findings with advance research — because our highest goal is to develop new, modern strategies to return productive people to society following the incidence of trauma."

UC San Diego Health System's Regional Level I Trauma Center is also dedicated to increasing trauma awareness and providing outstanding patient care.

For more information, call **619-543-7200** or visit **trauma.ucsd.edu**.

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