

Trauma Patients In Good Hands at Royal Columbian Hospital

Patient care and comfort are top priorities in RCH's trauma unit

By Victoria Fawkes

For as long as he can remember, 29-year-old Imran Valli has had an affinity for riding bikes. "My brother and I would watch dirt bike races as kids and we loved riding around our complex over spring break," he says. This year, Valli took lessons and began riding motorbikes recreationally, which quickly became one of his favorite pastimes. But on November 10, 2013, Valli suffered a serious injury while motor biking and required immediate care at Royal Columbian Hospital (RCH) to save his life.

On the day of the accident, Valli visited his parents and had plans to meet up with friends in the evening. He was around the corner from his Burnaby apartment when he collided with a car that had turned into the oncoming lane ahead of him. "I hit my brakes and tried to maneuver around the car, but there just wasn't enough room for me to stop. I knew I was going to make contact, but in that last fleeting moment I thought, 'This isn't going to be that bad,'" he says.

But when Valli arrived at RCH, his injuries proved to be very serious. He spent the next three days after the accident sedated at RCH. "I was in critical condition and had to have a tube put in to assist my breathing, as well as a tube in my chest, since I had torn a lung. I'd broken more than six ribs and chipped other bones, like my sternum

and spine." However, the most concerning injury Valli had sustained was the damage to his liver. He later learned that if doctors hadn't been able to get the bleeding in his liver under control, his injuries could have been fatal. "Looking back, it seemed like I was straddling the line between life and death," says Valli.

On November 13, 2013, Valli regained consciousness and immediately began working towards his recovery with the hospital's staff. "I was floored by the nurses at RCH. They are so compassionate, patient, and non-judgmental," he says. Valli was frequently stunned by the efforts of the staff to ensure his comfort. "I mentioned to one of the nurses in passing that I liked to sleep with my socks half off when I was at home. One day at the hospital, I fell asleep with my socks fully on my feet and woke up with them half off because the nurse remembered the conversation we had had. For them to know my comfort level in that much detail just shows how truly committed they are to the well-being of their patients," he says.

Trauma Surgeon Dr. Sue Sidhu, who treated Valli's liver injury, notes that although his injuries were extensive, the diverse team of specialists at RCH played a major role in his recovery. "Despite Mr. Valli's serious injuries, our multidisciplinary team helped to ensure his recovery by managing all aspects of his trauma care during his stay," says Sidhu.



Imran Valli (centre) is grateful to be able to stand with his girlfriend Natassia Premji and older brother Faizal Valli. Imran was treated at Royal Columbian Hospital after being seriously injured in a motorcycle collision in November 2013.

Dr. Nigel Aspinall, the trauma doctor who first attended to Valli, notes that there is no shortage of variety in the injuries the hospital treats. "We see a lot of motor vehicle accidents involving motorcyclists and pedestrians," says Aspinall. "Some of these patients turn out to not be seriously injured, but they still require a lot of time and care. Most of the patients turn out to have multiple injuries, and sometimes require a maximum effort on our part just to save their lives," he adds.

Trauma Nurse Practitioner Kathleen Fyvie, who works exclusively with trauma patients in collaboration with trauma physicians directing



As part of a diverse team of specialists at Royal Columbian Hospital, Trauma Surgeon Dr. Sue Sidhu treated Valli's liver injury.

in-patient care, discharge planning and follow-up, notes that RCH offers services to patients from all across BC. "We are a provincially designated Level 1 trauma centre, so we serve as both the referral centre for complex trauma patients from throughout the Fraser Health region, and as a resource for severely injured patients from

across the province," says Fyvie.

"Despite being under constant pressure, our shared commitment to excellence prevails, and our passion for delivering patient-centered care is what keeps us all focused as a team and leads the approach to ensuring the very best possible outcome for our patients," she adds.

Valli, who is now recovering at home with the help of his family and a home care worker, is grateful for the staff and doctors' role in his treatment and recovery. "It's amazing what we take for granted in good health. Having to rely on someone to that degree is difficult, but the staff at RCH were with me every step of the way."

RCH Trauma Stats:

- RCH receives 66,000 emergency patients a year, 12,000 of whom are trauma patients
- RCH receives more patients by BC Air Am-

- balance than any other hospital in the province
- Trauma is the number one cause of death in 15 — 45 year olds
- 7% of our trauma pa-

- tients are pediatrics (16 years of age or younger)
- The two most common causes of trauma: falls and motor vehicle collisions