

To whom it may concern,

I am an above knee, right leg amputee. In my work as a team leader for Amputees in Action, who supply amputee actors for casualty simulation, I have been playing casualty for many years in military, ambulance and fire service scenarios.

I have a great deal of experience of military 'care under fire' and civilian casualty extrication scenarios, during which I have experienced firsthand many different stretchers and ponchos. In my experience all of these have had their problems i.e. stretchers are easy to fall from and hard to secure casualties onto and ponchos are clumsy to use although small enough to pack away.

On many occasions I have been very uncomfortable and felt vulnerable to being dropped. An insecure body position will typically result in limbs falling off or out of the stretcher / poncho; a protruding limb will then get in the way of the people removing the casualty and is exposed to further damage.

The poncho seems to be the most commonly used as it is easily packed and in any Bergen. When these or other improvised stretchers are used there is a problem with the ground impacting on lower back and bottom.

The SMART Xtract stretcher is a huge improvement, when inside you feel safe, finding yourself in a cocoon with draw straps around you and securely tied in the stretcher. With a catastrophic injury like mine and even more so with a double amputation, the lower draw strap pulls the stretcher around the injury and any lower limb could be safely put with the casualty. This stops any branches or obtrusive objects connecting with the injury tourniquets and dressing. In my experience all too often tourniquets can be loosened or pulled away from the injury during the evacuation process, resulting in further blood loss.

The overall feeling of safety whilst in the Xtract is of huge benefit to of any casualty being removed from any scene.

Yours Sincerely,

Sean Gittings