Pinpointing Pain

APPROACHES TO IDENTIFYING THE CAUSE

THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL TREATMENT OF A PATIENT’S PAIN LIES IN IDENTIFYING THE TRUE SOURCE.

AN ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS is the foundation for providing pain relief. It is essential to understand the particular structure that is causing the pain (i.e., discs, nerves, muscles or joints).

“Traditional interventional pain medicine methods rely on injecting large amounts of medicine around the painful area, which may not discern the cause of pain,” explains Mark Janiga, M.D., DABPM, interventional pain physician at Midwest Spine Institute in Blaine, MN.

Precise, image-guided, evidenced-based diagnostic tests are used by the pain specialists at Midwest Spine Institute to identify a patient’s pain-generating structure in order to determine a more definitive diagnosis, and not simply to treat a symptom of their pain.

“MRIs, CT scans and EMGs are used to determine abnormalities, but these tests do not necessarily explain why a patient is in pain,” says Dr. Janiga.

Combining the results of image-guided diagnostic tests with the patient’s history, physical exam and radiographic images is used to determine the cause of a patient’s pain. These tests are useful when the physician performing these tests understands when to perform each test, the strengths and weaknesses for each test and which intervention is appropriate for the patient. Test results will either be positive (relieves the patient’s pain) or negative (does not relieve the patient’s pain).

Distributing Relief

Midwest Spine Institute pain specialists offer a variety of conservative and minimally invasive options, including a treatment used in sports medicine called prolotherapy.

“Prolotherapy works toward a more permanent solution to repair soft-tissue injuries or arthritis in the spine, shoulders, elbows and knees,” says Dr. Janiga. “There are various types of prolotherapy injections used to stimulate the body to begin healing painful ligaments and tendons. These injections trigger a healing cascade that ultimately results in the deposition of new collagen. Studies have shown that the connective tissues can be up to 200-400% stronger after prolotherapy treatments. I’ve found considerable success with my cases throughout the past seven years of practicing with prolotherapy. We hope more research will prove it to be an appropriate and effective treatment method of spinal, disc, neck and back pain.”

Applying Evidence-Based Medicine

Interventional pain management can be challenging and confusing. Unlike a blood pressure reading or an HgA1c, pain is hard to study because it is subjective. To be consistently successful in helping patients, a pain physician has to combine research evidence along with clinical experience. The interventional pain physicians of Midwest Spine Institute specialize in the latest diagnostic and evidence-based therapeutic pain-relieving techniques.

For more information about treatment methods or for referral information, visit www.midwestspineinstitute.com, call 1-800-353-7720 or e-mail scheduling@midwestspine.net.