

What should you know about...

Failed Back Surgery Syndrome (FBSS)

FBSS is a significant medical and socioeconomic problem in the US. It is estimated that the failure rate for back surgery is 15-30%. The re-operation rate is about 5%. Considering that there are an estimated 300,000 new back surgeries a year in the US, this represents a significant chronic pain problem.

Failure results when the basic surgery does not eliminate pain. The patient is therefore left with pain, often involving both the back and legs, which is unchanged or worse than prior to surgery. FBSS may also occur in the neck and arms after failed cervical spinal surgery.

The causes of FBSS may be mechanical resulting from unstable joints or spinal stenosis, or non mechanical involving scar tissue around nerves.

Treatment

FBSS is often treated in a multi-disciplinary fashion since patients who have this syndrome are often in excruciating pain. Medications, psychological counseling and physical therapy are the mainstays of treatment.

Epidural Neuroplasty

This procedure is performed in an outpatient center or office and involves "breaking up" scar tissue which results from prior back and neck surgery. With the use of x-ray guidance (fluoroscopy) a very small catheter is placed into the epidural space and medications are injected to break up the scar tissue and reduce the inflammation, thus alleviating the pain.

Radiofrequency Lesioning (RF)

RF lesioning involves lesioning the nerve to the facet joints of the back or neck with high energy directed through a small needle. This creates a controlled small destructive lesion of the nerve. Pulsed radiofrequency creates non-destructive (cold) lesions on nerve roots which can reduce arm and leg pain. The procedure is carefully performed by a Pain Specialist who has been trained in this procedure. Spinal pain can be relieved for 3-9 months using this technique.

Advanced Interventional Pain Medicine

Dr. Sanford M. Silverman is a board-certified Pain Specialist who can treat your pain with many different modalities. A combination of procedures, some more advanced, together with medication and physical therapy usually provide relief of pain.

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