

After 23 years of suffering, it's not surprising that Judith Crocco is well-informed about her chronic pain condition.

"I have what's called *Central Pain Syndrome*," she says. "It's a pain syndrome of central neurological origin. When the thalamus in the brain shuts down, pain signals are not abated, and therefore they flood your entire body."

As a result, Judith's daily activities have been severely restricted over the years.



SOUTHWEST FLORIDA NEUROSURGICAL & REHAB ASSOCIATES

JAMES P. WEINER, MD
ROBERT D. MEHRBERG, MD
PIERRE R. HYPOLITE, MD
MEGAN WAGNER, PA-C

"I've had to just rest a lot of the time: sitting, lying down," she explains. "I can't exercise or anything like that. I can go to the store, but beyond that I really can't do much without the pain flaring up."

Judith sought everywhere for a solution, but to little avail.

"I went through the nation," she emphasizes. "It's a miracle that I have not succumbed to it. Most people do."

A new option

Fortunately, Judith went to Southwest Florida Neurosurgical & Rehab Associates, where she learned about a new pain management alternative, human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG).

"Most people know of hCG from diet plans that include it," explains James P. Weiner, MD. "However, in recent years, some weight loss clinics have reported that patients noted a significant reduction in their pain as well while taking hCG."

"A number of these people had either a chronic pain syndrome or some kind of nerve sympathetic dystrophy where there was an anatomical problem with the central nervous system. They obtained pain relief when using the hCG – to the point that they were able to take fewer narcotics."

"Various pain organizations and scholarly journals got hold of the news and performed a couple of clinical trials," adds Megan Wagner, PA-C, who worked



Judith Crocco

Once considered mainly a feature of dietary plans, the hCG hormone is now proving beneficial for patients with chronic intractable pain.

with Judith. "They found that, even without a diet, patients using hCG could obtain remarkable pain relief."

Southwest Florida Neurosurgical & Rehab Associates soon began their own trial, and Judith was one of their first success stories.

"In addition to her medication, Judith had previously tried pain-relieving injections, physical therapy, a TENS unit, and massage therapy, but none of these was really effective for her pain," says Megan.

Thanks to the hCG injections, Judith has been able to take significantly less pain medication.

"Now that Judith has been able to decrease her morphine, she feels better about herself because she's not in so much pain," reflects Megan. "She has not participated in any dietary modification, and is using the hCG strictly for pain management, so there are no other aspects that could be having this positive effect."

"There are many chronic pain patients who don't want to be on so much medication and this gives them a much more natural option," concludes Dr. Weiner. "A high percentage

of patients using hCG have been able to reduce their opioid use by thirty to fifty percent, which is significant."

"It's a blessing"

"Every day, you inject yourself with a hundred units of hCG," explains Judith. "It's a very simple process, like taking insulin."

She expresses her appreciation for the relief it has given her after so many years of excruciating pain.

"For me, anything that helps is a miracle, and what I have experienced is a decrease in the pain in my abdominal area. My entire abdominal cavity, which was in terrible pain before, is almost numb now."

"It's really nice that I don't have that pain," adds Judith. "That's the most profound thing that I have experienced so far. My pain has been substantially decreased, and that's a blessing." **FHCN**—Michael J. Sabno

Southwest Florida Neurosurgical & Rehab Associates:

- Pain management
- Rehabilitative medicine
- Physical therapy
- LCD Therapy

Relief at last

The staff at Southwest Florida Neurosurgical & Rehab Associates welcome your questions and comments regarding this article. For additional information or to schedule a consultation, please call or visit one of their conveniently located offices: in Fort Myers at **(239) 432-0774, 12700 Creekside Ln., Suite 301**, and in Cape Coral at **(239) 772-5577, 413 Del Prado Blvd. South, Suite 201**.



James P. Weiner, MD, is board certified by the American Board of Anesthesiology. He received his medical degree and completed his residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation at Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, and completed an anesthesia residency and received fellowship training in pain management at the Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, VA. He also received fellowship training in anesthesia at Bowman-Gray Medical Center, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC. He is a member of the American Association of Electrodiagnostic Medicine, American Association of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, American Society of Anesthesiology, Florida Medical Society, Florida Society of Anesthesiology, International Association for the Study of Pain, and International Spinal Injection Society. He has published extensively in his areas of expertise.



Robert D. Mehrberg, MD, is a board-certified physiatrist, certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation, as well as in electrodiagnostic medicine. He completed his undergraduate studies and earned his medical degree at Tulane University, New Orleans, LA. He served his internship and his residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation at Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, where he was appointed chief resident. Dr. Mehrberg has lectured on, written, or coauthored numerous articles, abstracts, presentations, and publications concerned with the treatment and well being of rehabilitation patients. Dr. Mehrberg is a member of the American Association of Electrodiagnostic Medicine, American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and Association of Academic Physiatrists.



Pierre R. Hyppolite, MD, is fellowship-trained in spinal cord injury through the University of Miami's Jackson Memorial Hospital/Miami VA Medical Center. He is a graduate of the Faculte De Medicine Et De Pharmacie Universite D'etat d'Haiti, where he earned his medical degree and served his medical internship. Dr. Hyppolite attended Yale University School of Public Health and served an internal medicine internship at the New York Medical College's Our Lady of Mercy Medical Center. He completed his residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation at NYMC's Metropolitan Hospital Center. Dr. Hyppolite is an associate member of the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and the American Paraplegia Society. He is fluent in English, French, and Creole.



Megan Wagner, PA-C, is a nationally certified physician assistant licensed in the state of Florida. Physician assistants work closely with doctors to provide medical care in the specialty of their supervising physician. PAs are trained in clinical diagnostics, medication therapies, lifestyle modifications, patient education, and performing procedures. Megan completed her undergraduate studies in biology with a minor in chemistry at Southeastern University. She then went on to pursue her Master's degree in Clinical Science at Barry University in St. Petersburg, FL. She is an active member of the American Academy of Physician Assistants and the Florida Academy of Physician Assistants.

Please visit Southwest Florida Neurosurgical & Rehab Associates on the web. Just set your browser to **www.swfna.com** and select "Pain Management & Rehabilitation" from the menu at the top of the screen.

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"The benefit of hCG to my pain has been amazing. I have a rare pain condition which has responded to the hCG greatly. I have been able to decrease my pain medicine. I've been blessed by this trial, which I have been on for about three months now. I believe that if a person is able, they should join the hCG trial and feel their own benefit. The trial is monitored by Megan Wagner, PA-C, who is an asset to the pain patients. She's warm and personable, and that is extremely important, because people in pain don't get out often to socialize. And Dr. Weiner, well, he's a champion."
- Judith Crocco