

Managing Chronic Pain



After back surgery fails to provide relief for a disc injury, many patients despair of ever finding the answer. Fortunately, a skilled pain management team can improve both function and quality of life.

"I would highly recommend Dr. Mehrberg to anyone," emphasizes Georgia. "He's outstanding."

Back pain from an accident or injury can be a source of ongoing misery, and Georgia Wildman has had more than her fair share.

"It was in the middle of a hurricane," she remembers. "I was frightened, and I pulled a mattress off of a guest bed and dragged it into the kitchen. That's when I injured my back."

Georgia consulted her family doctor about her excruciating pain. She ultimately elected to undergo a spinal procedure, which helped for a time, but like many patients who have had back surgery, she ended up with some residual pain.

"After that procedure, I healed very quickly and I was up and about," she recalls. "It was great. But not too long after that, my back pain returned. I was driving home from visiting the doctor when I was cut off by a group of kids and had to apply my brakes really hard, and from that time on, I've had back pain."

Thankfully, she has received ongoing help from Southwest Florida Neurosurgical & Rehab Associates in her effort to find relief.

"We ran the gamut in treatments until we were able to come close to solving the back pain...as close as possible without additional surgery," she says.

Searching for solutions

Robert D. Mehrberg, MD, a board-certified physiatrist at the practice,



Georgia Wildman

FHCN PHOTOS BY AMANDA SMITH

explains that for patients like Georgia with unresolved chronic pain, the condition often can be neither reversed nor completely resolved. The goal in these cases is to reduce the patient's pain as much as possible.



**SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
NEUROSURGICAL
& REHAB ASSOCIATES**

JAMES P. WEINER, MD
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"We have a wide variety of treatments that we can offer in our practice, and we work closely with the neurological surgeons," he says. "We provide injection therapy and physical therapy, and we can also offer treatments like spinal cord stimulators, and pain medicines which are not addictive, which can be helpful as well. Basically, we offer a variety of tools to improve a patient's lifestyle and quality of life."

"We try to use the medications which have the least side effects, which control the pain, and provide adequate relief for the patient."

He adds that Georgia is just one of many success stories.

"We have tried a variety of treatments which have helped her over the years, from injections to therapy. Right now, we have Georgia on a medication regimen which is fairly mild but allows her

to do everything that she needs to do on a day-to-day basis," explains the doctor.

"She is basically on a maintenance program, and we will follow her closely to make sure that her pain is controlled, that she's not having any problems with side effects from the medication. She has good pain relief and is able to function reasonably with minimal side effects."

"Highly recommended"

In Georgia's case, the road to relief has been filled with challenges, but she is doing well today, thanks to her treatment.

"Dr. Mehrberg came up with the idea of giving me a drug called *tramadol*," she explains. "It's a time-released medication, and I have been able to cut back on my hydrocodone dosage as a result of taking that. It works well about ninety percent of

the time, so it's my salvation right now."

Georgia thanks Dr. Mehrberg for his ongoing care, adding that he has been her favorite doctor now for several years.

"I have enjoyed going to Dr. Mehrberg more than any doctor I have ever met," she adds. "He's very down-to-earth, he's easy to talk with, and he always offers helpful suggestions. I think he's terrific." **FHCN**—Michael J. Sabno

Southwest Florida Neurosurgical & Rehab Associates:

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



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.

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.

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**.