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Peter S. Schreiber, DO, is board certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation. He completed his undergraduate studies in microbiology at the University of Florida, Gainesville, and received his medical degree from Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine, Davie, FL. He served his internship and a combined residency in internal

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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.

Relief at last

The staff at Southwest Florida Rehab & Pain Management Associates and Southwest Florida Neurosurgical 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, 632 Del Prado Blvd. North, Suite 101.

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Managing Pain, Providing Rehabilitation Under One Roof



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Too often, I see patients who have tried piecemeal approaches to managing their pain and rehabilitation, consulting one practice for diagnostic tests, another for pain management, and still another for rehabilitative therapy," reports James P. Weiner, MD, a board-certified anesthesiologist and highly skilled physiatrist at Southwest Florida Rehab & Pain Management Associates.

"That's counterproductive," observes Dr. Weiner. "Each specialist is managing only a portion of the patient's problem, and no one is taking a comprehensive view of healing.

"At Southwest Florida Rehab and Pain Management, we take a comprehensive approach, from diagnostic x-rays to pain management techniques, physical therapy, and rehabilitative medicine, all under one roof. This saves patients time and ensures that all treatments work together for a common goal: reducing pain while restoring function."

Dr. Weiner became aware of the efficacy of this approach when he was injured during military service in Beirut, Lebanon. "I was already trained in pain management," he relates, "but my own injury gave me an appreciation of what rehabilitative medicine has to offer. I saw a natural progression toward linking the two specialties: pain management allows a physician to make a patient comfortable enough to handle rehabilitative therapies that help restore normal function."

His insight led him to combine pain management with rehabilitation in his own practice. Both are delivered with an emphasis on individualized patient care.

"We always schedule extra time with a patient during an initial exam so we can have an in-depth conversation that will allow us to accurately develop an understanding of a patient's problems. People don't like to be perceived as complainers," Dr. Weiner points out, "so many times, they downplay their symptoms. By

getting to know our patients, their interests, and their daily activities, we can gather the information we need to assess their problems. Accurately diagnosing the cause of a patient's pain is the first step in designing a truly effective treatment plan."

Dr. Weiner explains that if a patient hasn't told his referring physician about all his symptoms, that physician can only prescribe treatment for the known problem. A patient who is to be treated for back pain, for instance, may not have told the diagnosing physician that his hands were numb. Such a symptom could indicate a different underlying cause for the patient's difficulties and thus a change in the approach to treatment.

"Some patients' daily activities may involve motions that exacerbate pain, and we need to be aware of those so we not only can treat their pain but also can offer suggestions for activities to avoid or ways to accomplish tasks that will not add to their discomfort.

"We also strive to reduce a patient's need for narcotics to control their pain and to reduce the total amount of medication they need to function."

Dr. Weiner adds that a conservative approach to pain management and rehabilitation are top priorities. "Our goal is to try to return a patient to his or her previous level of function without surgical intervention," he assures, "but when surgery is required, we work toward ensuring that a patient is in the best physical shape possible to ensure the quickest recovery.

"The important thing is for people to know that there is no need for them to suffer," concludes Dr. Weiner. "Whatever a patient's level of pain or injury, we can help design ways to work around it. This is all part of the concept of comprehensive care on which this practice was founded." **FHCN**

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