

Managing Pain, Providing Rehabilitation for Patients

“Too often, I see patients who have tried to manage 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 Neurosurgical & Rehab Associates.



SOUTHWEST FLORIDA NEUROSURGICAL & REHAB ASSOCIATES

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“That’s counterproductive,” he adds. “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 Neurosurgical and Rehab Associates, 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.

Searching for solutions

“Some patients’ daily activities may involve motions that exacerbate pain,” Dr. Weiner explains, “and we need to be aware of those so we not only can treat them, but also 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 says the practice offers a wide variety of treatment options and they work closely with all of the physicians involved with the individual patient’s care.



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“We provide injection therapy and physical therapy, and we can also offer treatments like spinal cord stimulators, and pain medicines that are not addictive, which can be helpful as well,” he explains. “Basically, we offer a variety of tools to improve a patient’s lifestyle and quality of life.

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

HCG (Human Chorionic Gonadotropin) – a hormone produced by the placenta during pregnancy – has become an effective treatment option for patients suffering from spinal conditions, fibromyalgia, severe headaches and chronic pain.

“HCG stimulates the production of testosterone, progesterone, estradiol and thyroid, all of which should bring relief to chronic pain sufferers,” Dr. Weiner explains. “And one of the more pleasing

side effects is the accompanying weight loss. This hormone is used frequently for weight loss and has few side effects because it is a natural hormone. It’s non-addictive as well, unlike many oral pain medications.”

Dr. Weiner adds that conservative approaches 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 closely with our practice’s neurosurgeons 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**



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

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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.

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- Rehabilitative medicine
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Relief at last

The staff at Southwest Florida Neurosurgical & Rehab Associates welcomes 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.

Please visit Southwest Florida Neurosurgical & Rehab Associates on the web. Go to www.swfna.com and select “Pain Management & Rehabilitation” from the menu at the top of the screen.