



TEXAS PHYSICAL THERAPY
SPECIALISTS

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Choose Back Surgery At Your Own Risk

Fusion surgeries found to have increased risk of death; patients should consider safer alternatives

SAN ANTONIO, TX (April 7, 2010) – The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) has just reported on an alarming increase in complex spinal surgery for lumbar spinal stenosis. In just five years, from 2002 to 2007, the number of complex fusion surgeries to treat lumbar (low back) spinal stenosis soared from a rate of 1.3 per 100,000 to 19.9 per 100,000. The study showed that life-threatening complications occurred in 5.6% of patients having complex spinal fusions. Patients who had complex fusion had longer hospitalizations, higher rates of re-hospitalization, and three times the rate of serious complications such as heart attack and stroke. These surgeries continue despite little medical consensus on whether or not these procedures are helpful or should even be used in the management of lumbar spinal stenosis.

“This study supports what we have been seeing in our clinics for years,” said Dr. Robert Wainner, PT, PhD, Vice-President of Clinical Excellence of Texas Physical Therapy Specialists (TexPTS). “Older adults are seeking care from physical therapists following significant surgeries, and they frequently have problems that weren’t there prior to surgery and yet they still have back and leg pain. We hope this finally sounds the alarm and stops the madness that is going on in surgical spine care.” Dr. Wainner cautions that patients should be aware of the risks of these procedures and recognize the procedures may not help them.

Fortunately there is good news for healthcare consumers as a previous randomized clinical trial demonstrated that patients with lumbar spinal stenosis report significant improvement after physical therapy, with the greatest gains occurring in patients who received manual physical therapy, exercise, and a progressive body-weight supported treadmill walking program. Dr. Wainner noted that, “It just makes sense to try physical therapy first, which is a low cost, low risk, and most importantly effective treatment for chronic low back pain due to lumbar spinal stenosis.” Consumers should actively seek care from a qualified physical therapist for their low back complaints.

“You have drugs, you have surgery, or you have us,” explained Dr. Wainner. Physical therapists are uniquely trained to manage individuals with chronic musculoskeletal conditions like low back and neck pain and use a combination of low risk, state-of-the-art procedures such as manipulation and therapeutic exercise. “The reality is that very few treatments have been shown to be as effective. Physical therapists are clearly the best first choice for individuals suffering from musculoskeletal conditions,” Dr. Wainner concluded.

For more information about how a physical therapist can help alleviate pain, minimize the use of prescription drugs and expensive diagnostic imaging, and prevent painful and costly surgery, visit www.TexPTS.com or give us a call at (888) 658-8483. Remember...we make doing business with us easy and treat everybody as family! You can also contact the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists (www.AAOMPT.org). AAOMPT represents physical therapists by promoting excellence in orthopaedic manual physical therapy practice, education and research.

For more information on managing lumbar spinal stenosis go to: <http://tinyurl.com/stenosisRCT>.

Hear the NPR story at www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=125627307.

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Texas Physical Therapy Specialists

Texas Physical Therapy Specialists (TexPTS) is a privately owned, multi-site physical therapy practice. Founded in 2004, TexPTS seeks to continually improve the health of the local communities they serve via a passionate commitment to Clinical Excellence and AmaZing! Service. Home of the largest number of board certified physical therapists and manual therapy fellows in Texas, TexPTS prides itself on helping their clients get better, faster, and stronger to achieve their maximum quality of life. They also seek to create an AmaZing! customer experience that exceeds their clients, families, and referral sources' expectations. TexPTS provides numerous specialty services including aquatics, EMG/NCV testing, sports medicine, and wellness/fitness assessments. They serve the South Central Texas region with 13 locations in San Antonio, Austin, and Tyler. TexPTS received the 2009 Practice Award as the top private physical therapy practice in the country from the Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association and was named to the Inc. 500 list of fastest growing companies in America. For more information about how TexPTS can help alleviate pain, minimize the use of prescription drugs and expensive diagnostic imaging, and prevent painful and costly surgery, visit www.TexPTS.com or call (888) 658-8483. We make doing business with us easy and treat everybody as family!