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A. Monitoring Outcomes of Care

The significance of practicing patient centered, evidence based care may very well be in utilizing appropriate outcomes research. No matter the therapeutic intervention chosen, careful monitoring and recording of outcomes is of paramount importance in the determination of 'did it work?' Relative to back pain, there are numerous valid and reliable outcome assessment tools which can be utilized. There are tools to measure pain (numerical pain scale, visual analog pain scale) and tools to measure function (Oswestry disability index, Roland Morris activity scale). Psychological distress can be measured with the PHQ-9 scale (depression) or with a subset within the Short Form-36. And to fully assess the effect of your intervention, any prior or

concurrent health care must be reported. Currently, the NCOA back pain recognition program requires the monitoring of each of these parameters for all lower back pain patients – pain, function, psychological distress, other care. The risk in accurately recording and reporting outcomes is in learning what the real outcome results for your particular type of care will be. However, to practice patient centered care is to willingly take that risk.

Bogduk, N. Outcome Research. J Manipulative and Physio Ther 2007; 30(5): 333-34.

II) Geriatrics and information resources

Two websites offer a wealth of information to the practitioner and to the patient relative to the specific health care needs of the geriatric population: www.nia.nih.gov and <http://nihseniorhealth.gov>

The NIA is the National Institute on Aging. The site includes a summary of current research, possible grants and a list of resources available to providers. The NIH Senior Health website includes resources for patients about aging. It includes information about a variety of diseases which afflict seniors: arthritis, Alzheimer's, balance problems, cancer, etc.

We strongly encourage all providers to use the NIA site and to direct their senior patients to the NIH Senior Health site. The senior population is the most rapidly growing segment of our country and our world.

B. Office News

Drs. Coulis and Furtado have been invited to lecture at the Yale Shoreline Medical Center with Judith Gorelick, MD of Connecticut Neurosurgery. They will be discussing "Current Trends in the Treatment of Age Related Spinal Disorders" on November 1, 2007 at 6:30 PM

The doctors of Shoreline Spine & Pain Associates have been become preferred for **Connecticare** and **Focus Healthcare and Management Group**, a leading Workman's Compensation Credentialing Body.

Drs. Coulis and Furtado have also recently become fellows of the **American Back Society** and members of the **American Chronic Pain Association**.



"Specializing in the evaluation, treatment, and rehabilitation of musculoskeletal conditions."

C. Question of the Month

What is a reasonable algorithm to use when evaluating a patient with lower back pain? We recommend asking the following 3 questions:

1. Rule out **RED FLAGS** – history of cancer, unexpected weight change, age over 55 and under 15, corticosteroid use, minor trauma, fever, unrelenting pain not relieved with rest, history of osteopenia, etc.
2. Rule out **YELLOW FLAGS** – (indicators of

psychosocial overlay), depression, suicidal ideology, dissatisfaction with all other providers, non-anatomical distribution of symptoms, substance abuse, etc.

3. Functional Impairment – can be measured with proven questionnaires (Bournemouth, Oswestry, Roland-Morris, FABQ) or ROM or even a simple list of questions such as can you dress yourself, use the bathroom, etc.

These three questions provide reassurance that the patient can be safely managed by whatever

intervention is chosen, and the functional impairment becomes the outcome measure to determine effectiveness of the therapy applied.

Whenever possible a 4th question is added:

4. Can the tissue origin of pain be identified? Many tools to answer this question exist, however, for most, their reliability and validity have not adequately been tested.

D. Contact Us

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Please be aware that Drs. Coulis and Furtado are available to give a 20 minute lunchtime presentation on how a medical physician can best collaborate with a chiropractor. They are also available to give 45 minute grand round type lectures on Introduction to Chiropractic and Non-Surgical Management of Lower Back Pain. Please contact our office to schedule either Dr.

Coulis or Dr Furtado to come to your office.

If you would like some additional literature about our office and the services we provide, please contact our office and request our Introduction to the Shoreline Spine & Pain Associates package.