

SPINAL SURGERY RESEARCH

HEALTH ISSUES #14

Experts estimate that nearly 600,000 Americans opt for back operations each year. But for many, surgery is just an empty promise, say pain management experts along with many top surgeons.

A new study shows that in many cases surgery can often backfire, leaving patients in more pain with as much as a 41 percent increase in the use of painkillers following spinal surgery.

NBC NEWS Carroll, L. Back surgery may backfire on patients in pain. NBC News. Oct. 2010

“No operation in any field of surgery leaves in its wake more human wreckage than spinal surgery on the lumbar discs. Many lumbar disc surgery patients are subjected to numerous operations, and after each operation, the patient is worse.”

ANTHONY DEPALMA, M.D.
Professor of Orthopedic Surgery

Complication rates for spinal surgical intervention in degenerative disc disease are as high as 55% and include hematoma, neurological adjacent segment degeneration, infection and hardware failure.

Deyo, R. Gray. D. Kreuter, W. U.S trends in lumbar disc surgery of degenerative conditions. Spine, 2005; 30(12)

DISC HERNIATIONS when dealt with in the first six months have better outcomes than discs that are not dealt with quickly.

Rihn, J. Hilibrand, A. Radcliff, K.. Duration of Symptoms Resulting from Lumbar Disc Herniation: Effect on Treatment Outcomes.

There is a time and place for surgery, but conservative measures should always be exhausted first and the leading conservative approach is Chiropractic care.

A study of 1450 back pain patients, half of whom underwent spinal surgery, revealed that after two years, only 26 percent of those who had surgery returned to work. That translates to a resounding 74% failure rate.

Trang N. M.D, Ph.D; Randolph, D. MD, Talmage, J. M.D. Long term Outcomes of Lumbar Fusion Among Workers' Compensation Subjects: Spine. 36(4):320-331, February 15, 2011

42.7% OF WORKERS WHO FIRST SAW A SURGEON ENDED UP IN SURGERY, AS OPPOSED TO ONLY 1.5% OF THOSE WHO FIRST SAW A CHIROPRACTOR.

Keeney BJ, Fulton-Kehoe D, Turner JA, Wickizer TM, Chan KC, Early predictors of lumbar spine surgery after occupational back injury results from a prospective study of workers in Washington State. Spine, 2013 May 15;38(11):953-64