

Therapy Options Bulletin for Medical Professionals

# Enfield Health & Wellness Center

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### Fast Results for Newly Diagnosed

# Degenerative Cervical Spine Disease

More than half of the population is likely to experience degenerative cervical spine disease in their lifetime. Resulting radiculopathy is less common with an annual incidence reported at 83 per 100,000.<sup>1</sup> Physical therapy is widely advocated as the first-line approach,<sup>2</sup> but there

has been little evidence to help doctors tell patients what to expect from therapy and when. To help with these conversations, Dr. Hey Hwee and colleagues followed 30 consecutive patients to measure their response to their first few physical therapy visits.<sup>3</sup>

All patients presented with neck pain, referred pain, and radicular pain. Symptom duration ranged from 22 days to 85 days with a mean of 56 days. Patients in the study ranged from



20 to 79 years of age with the majority of patients being between 50 and 59 years old. All diagnoses were confirmed by radiograph. Patients received individual physical therapy treatment, and results were compared to baseline after one and two weeks of treatment. The most common treatment elements were joint mobilization, thermal modalities, and intermittent traction.

After one week, neck range of motion improved an average of 13% across six measures of movement. After two weeks of treatment, pain ratings dropped from a median of 8 to a median of 4 on a 0-10 visual analog scale. Improvements were measured in patients' ability to carry heavy loads, employment duties, and house work.

These results are in keeping with our experience with similar symptoms. Doctors referring patients for physical therapy for newly diagnosed degenerative cervical spine disease can tell patients that improved neck motion is common after one week of treatment and that many patients have their pain cut in half by two weeks of treatment.

## McKenzie Certified Care

Literally hundreds of peer-reviewed research papers now support the use of McKenzie Method in spine care. McKenzie Method is a therapy approach proven to produce faster, longer lasting, and less expensive results for spine-related complaints. This has been demonstrated repeatedly in journals such as *Spine*, the *Journal of Neurology*, *JMPT*, *Physiotherapy*, and the *New England Journal of Medicine*. McKenzie Certified care is one of the many

therapy options available at Enfield Health & Wellness Center.

#### REFERENCES

- 1. Todd A. Cervical spine: degenerative conditions. Curr Rev Musculoskelet Med. 2011; 4 (4): 168-174.
- 2. Gross A, Goldsmith C, Hoving J, et al. Conservative management of mechanical neck disorders: a systematic review. *J Rheumatol.* 2007; 34: 1083 1102.
- 3. Hey H, Lau P, Hee H, et al. Short-term results of physiotherapy in patients with newly diagnosed degenerative cervical spine disease. *Singapore Med J.* 2012; 53 (3): 179-182.