Research: Quality Of Life Improves With Minimally Invasive Surgery For Low Back Pain

Beaumont research findings published in the February online issue of Spine **[1]** shows that patients who have a low back surgery called minimally invasive transforaminal lumbar interbody fusion, end up better off in many ways than patients who have more invasive surgery to alleviate debilitating pain.

“About 90 percent of adults experience low back pain in their lifetime, which can be caused by spinal instability, stenosis, spondylolisthesis, and symptomatic degenerative disc disease,” says **Mick Perez-Cruet, M.D.** [2], neuro-spine surgeon at Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak and professor, Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine.

The Beaumont study, led by Dr. Perez-Cruet, found that minimally invasive procedures with smaller incisions can reduce chronic low back pain, hospital stays, complications and scarring. It also can lower costs and infection rates compared with more invasive, open procedures.

The seven-year study looked at 304 patients who received the minimally invasive procedure. There were 120 men and 184 women with a mean age of 62.4 years, ranging from 19 to 93 years.

“Patients have demonstrated a very high rate of satisfaction with the minimally invasive technique. The majority of my patients are completely pain free and have returned to work and daily activities and have an improved quality of life,” explains Dr. Perez-Cruet.

Chronic low back pain occurs mostly between ages 30 and 50, due in part to aging but also because of inactive lifestyles with too little exercise, according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

Lower back pain may be caused by nerve or muscle irritation or bone lesions. Most low back pain follows injury or trauma to the back, but pain may also be caused by degenerative conditions such as arthritis or disc disease, osteoporosis or other bone diseases or congenital abnormalities to the spine. Obesity, smoking, weight gain during pregnancy, stress and poor physical condition may contribute to lower back pain.

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