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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Capstone Study” Finds Intradiscal Biacuplasty Superior to Conservative Therapy for Discogenic Lumbar Back Pain

March 19, 2015, NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – Intradiscal biacuplasty (IDB), a minimally invasive procedure, performed better for treating disc pain than medications, physical therapy or alternative medicine, study investigators reported today. Results were presented in a scientific poster at the 31st Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Pain Medicine.

“Further, there were improvements in function, so people were able to do more,” said lead author, Mehul Desai, M.D., M.P.H., in affiliation with George Washington University Medical Center in Washington, D.C. “Patients felt that they were healthier after the procedure.”

Historically, patients suffering from discogenic low-back pain have been relegated to trying conservative management for prolonged periods or undergoing invasive surgical procedures, Desai said. This prospective, randomized, multi-center, open-label trial compared conservative medical management (CMM), including pharmacological management, physical therapy and lifestyle changes, to IDB, a technique that uses cooled radiofrequency to destroy culprit nociceptive nerves in degenerative spinal discs.

At baseline, the IDB group (with 29 subjects) and the CMM group (with 34 subjects) had similar demographics, body mass and scores on the visual analog scale (VAS), which measures self report of pain, and on other measures of function, disability, depression, global impression of change and health-related quality of life.

At six months follow-up, the IDB group exceeded the CMM group on every outcome, including mean VAS score reduction (-2.4 vs. -0.56; p = 0.02), and had substantially more treatment responders who saw a 2-point or 30 percent drop in VAS score: 50 percent vs. 18 percent.

As with any procedure, candidate selection matters. Desai explained that patients who have relatively healthy discs, who do not have multiple disc issues, who are not obese and who are motivated make the best candidates for biacuplasty.

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While the research team is excited about the positive study results, Desai stressed there is much work to do in educating patients and doctors. Furthermore, efforts will be directed toward gaining better insurance coverage for IDB.

“This study is the capstone of several other studies that have come before,” he said. “We need to put together publications looking at pooled outcomes across the studies and analyze data that we already have regarding the economic value of this procedure. Also, we are looking forward to the one-year outcome data that will be available this summer.”

*Poster LB003 – A Prospective, Randomized, Multi-Center, Open-Label Clinical Trial Comparing Intradiscal Biacuplasty to Conservative Therapy for Discogenic Lumbar Back Pain Funding: Halyard Health*

**About AAPM**
The American Academy of Pain Medicine is the premier medical association for pain physicians and their treatment teams with over 2,500 members. Now in its 32nd year of service, the Academy’s mission is to optimize the health of patients in pain and eliminate pain as a major public health problem by advancing the practice and specialty of pain medicine through education, training, advocacy and research. Information is available on the Academy’s website at [www.painmed.org](http://www.painmed.org).

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