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Interventional Pain Procedures and Spinal Cord Stimulation

A statement from the American Academy of Pain Medicine

While valid concerns have been raised by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists regarding [spinal cord stimulators \(SCS\)](#), the American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPM) feels that focusing on these concerns alone does not tell the whole story.

Pain remains one of the most common reasons people seek medical help, and chronic pain is often diverse in cause, complex in mechanism, and multifaceted in management. AAPM strongly believes that the most effective and efficient approach to treating pain is to address the individual needs of each patient and utilize a variety of treatment options including nonpharmacological, pharmacological, interventional/procedural, and surgical modalities, such as spinal cord stimulation (SCS).

While interventional pain procedures, including SCS, do not work for all patients, they do have research-demonstrated benefits and a proven track record of success. For example, electrical stimulation/neuromodulation has been used for over 30 years as a non-pharmacological means of treating chronic pain. Multiple well-designed randomized controlled trials have demonstrated SCS to provide effective pain relief compared to medical therapy for many difficult-to-treat chronic pain conditions.

To ensure that patients receive the best treatment experience with interventional pain procedures, SCS should be performed by pain specialists, neurosurgeons, or spine surgeons, who have extensive, specialized training and experience in SCS, and the ability to identify, minimize, and manage potential complications associated with the procedure.

Like other surgical modalities, there are potential risks involved with all interventional pain procedures. However, spinal cord stimulation is a procedure that when appropriately utilized, can tremendously reduce pain and improve function for chronic pain sufferers.

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About AAPM

The American Academy of Pain Medicine is the premier medical association for pain physicians and their treatment teams with some 2,000 members. Now in its 35th year of service, the Academy's mission is to advance and promote the full spectrum of multidisciplinary pain care, education, advocacy, and research to improve function and quality of life for people in pain. Information is available on the Academy's website at painmed.org.

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