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NEWEST RESEARCH

FEWER VISITS

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Back Pain in America: Part 1

ST PAUL, MN (November 17, 2006) - Back pain has been and continues to be one of the most common ailments known to mankind. Research suggests that 4 out of every 5 individuals will at one time or another have a complaint of lower back pain. In this series, we will look at what recent research suggests for people with back pain.

According to the Mayo Clinic and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), most back pain is the result of muscle strain, awkward movements during lifting, poor posture, weak core muscle strength and endurance and generally poor overall fitness. These factors are frequently involved with both the sudden onset of back pain as well as chronic, long-standing back pain.

With a plethora of options available, you might ask yourself "What is the best choice for my back pain?" The answer is Physical Therapy.

In the January 12 edition of the Wall Street Journal, an article titled "A Novel Plan Helps Hospital Wean Itself Off of Pricey Tests" Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle reviewed their process for patients with back pain and found that the best option for patients with lower back pain was being treated by a physical therapist first. Patients interviewed reported faster relief in symptoms and were able to return to normal activities. Thomas Kundig, a man with a history of back pain from a rock climbing accident reported under the old system when his back would flare up he would wait a week to see a specialist, have X-Rays and painkillers prescribed as well as MRI. "I was spending all my time in doctor's office." By following the new guidelines, this patient had 4 physical therapy visits and says his back is better now than it has been in a long time. "I felt they were setting me up for more of a permanent solution." Research articles have supported this position for years and Seattle company Starbucks is now making this their corporate policy.

In the July 2006 issue of the Clinical Journal of Pain, researchers found that patients who were seen for early intervention (defined as 2 days after onset) by a physical therapist reported significantly greater reductions of perceived pain at 6 months after injury than patients who waited 4 weeks before receiving therapy.

Findings in the November 2006 issue of the Journal of Behavioral Medicine reported that patients considered physical therapists "particularly helpful" in the provision of social support. Physical therapists were named as providing the greatest amount of all three types of social support and were rated as rarely providing unhelpful social support.

In the November 2006 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association, researchers found that physical therapy provided similar improvements in pain, physical function and disability as surgery for patients with herniated discs. Physical therapy was also rated the most cost-effective and efficient treatment for back pain from herniated discs. In the April 2000 issue of the Journal of Orthopedic and Sports Physical Therapy, therapists who had achieved a clinical specialist certification provided patients with more cost-effective and efficient treatments

than did therapists who were not so certified. An article in the April 1999 issue of the Journal of Orthopedic and Sports Physical Therapy found that the process involved in achieving the clinical specialist certification improves the critical reasoning and teaching skills of therapists to a level beyond simple application of knowledge.

According to Dr. John Groves, President of Groves Physical Therapy (Groves PT), "Physical therapy treatments are designed to address the individual needs of the patient in order to help them return to their normal level of function. In the past several years the research is showing what therapists have always known; that specific treatments delivered in a one on one setting by a trained physical therapist have a much higher success rate than giving patients generic exercises to do at home. We are also seeing evidence that an active, exercise-based approach is significantly better than the modality-only treatments of the past." For example, in the April 2006 issue of Rheumatology, researchers found the best practice in managing back and neck pain was based on active self-management and included exercise therapy provided in a stepped approach by a physical therapist. An interesting sub-finding also suggests that those with persistent pain may need more intense work to remove the barriers to recovery.

For more information about how a physical therapist can help alleviate pain, minimize the use of prescription drugs and expensive diagnostic imaging, and prevent painful and costly surgery, visit www.grovespt.com.

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About Groves Physical Therapy:

Groves Physical Therapy is a privately owned, multi-site Physical Therapy practice in St Paul and Brooklyn Center. Founded in 2004, their mission is to deliver the highest quality, evidence-based physical therapy management to patients with unquestionable ethics, unparalleled quality, superior service, and at the best value. Their physical therapists are Board Certified in Orthopedic Practice and are Fellowship trained in Manual Therapy, credentials that only 1-2% of Physical Therapists nationwide have obtained. They utilize manual physical therapy and therapeutic exercise based on the newest research to achieve the best results in fewer visits. For more information on Groves Physical Therapy, please call 651-209-6144 or 763-566-3798 or visit: www.grovespt.com.