



The Spinal Column

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February 2009

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What's New at LSI

LSI Opens the Door to the Western U.S.

LSI celebrates the grand opening of the outpatient surgery

center in Scottsdale, Arizona in January.

» [Full story...](#)

» [Watch the LSI 5-Day Process](#)



Ask the Expert

This month's topic is Medical Research with Director of Business Strategy and Research John Polikandriotis.

If you have a question relating to LSI surgical centers, staff, services and other related topics, please let us know.

» [Read the Q & A](#)

» [Read more of John's post on Bill's Blog](#)

Laser Spine Institute Makes Medical Donation to Gridiron Greats

LSI has donated \$1 million to the Gridiron Greats charitable organization to provide medical assistance to retired football players suffering from chronic back and neck pain.

» [Full story...](#)

» [Learn more about Gridiron Greats organization](#)

Patient Spotlight

Bean is Back and Healthier than Ever

PGA golfer Andy Bean won the Regions Charity Classic and Charles Schwab Championship in 2008 after undergoing treatment at LSI for his lower back pain.

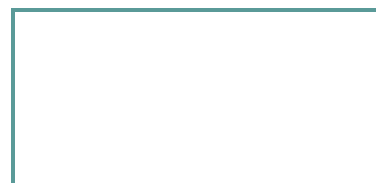
» [Full story...](#)

» [More Andy Bean coverage](#)



Wellness 101

Ask The Doctor



Q: While reading my MRI report, I noticed the words "bulging disc" written several times. What is a bulging disc and can LSI correct this condition?

» **The Answer**

» **Watch the animation of a Percutaneous Laser Discectomy procedure**



Getting the Best Sleep with Back and Neck Pain

Chronic pain makes a comfortable night sleep more challenging and almost impossible to get restful sleep for the day ahead. Let's explore how you can have a better night's rest.

» **Click here for more information.**

» **Visit the LSI Resource Center**



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Patient Charts Go Paperless

LSI has recently adopted the Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system to replace paper charts and create a more efficient system for medical records retrieval.

Many physicians and hospitals have transitioned to some level of EMR in an effort to enhance information, maximize security and improve patient care. The dedicated LSI operations team is confident that the benefits of the EMR system are aligned with the company's commitment to providing the highest quality service to patients.



With the introduction of EMR, LSI patients will benefit from the following:

Speed – Simplifying the retrieval process by inputting the information directly, rather than sorting through paper charts, EMR offers the clinical staff more time with patients. This organized infrastructure also reduces troubleshooting, for example, locating a chart or films.

Storage – During the LSI process, a patient undergoes a complete evaluation, imaging and diagnostic testing, if necessary, in addition to medical history review and clearance. All of this information can be kept safely and well organized within the EMR system.

Security – A patient's records are kept confidential and made available to authorized users only.

Accessibility – Authorized users from different LSI departments will be able to access a patient's electronic file at the same time, ensuring timeliness and accuracy. If a patient should visit more than one LSI location, records can

be sent and accessed from different locations as well. For example, an outside MRI facility can use EMR to send up-to-date patient images to LSI.

Efficiency – A patient's pathology, clearance, images, discussions and testing can be compiled and accessed with EMR quickly and easily by an LSI authorized user. The EMR process improves workflow, which results in quicker and more informed healthcare decisions for the patient.



The EMR system provides a secure, organized patient record infrastructure and will evolve as LSI continues to offer the best and most efficient healthcare to patients in need of spine-related minimally invasive surgical treatment.

[Read more about LSI Services](#)



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LSI Opens the Door to the Western U.S.

LSI has helped over 9,000 patients get their lives back through minimally-invasive endoscopic spinal surgery within the Tampa facility and Scottsdale office-based surgical center. On January 9th, 2009, the ribbon was cut and the door opened officially to the LSI Arizona outpatient surgery center in Scottsdale.



From left to right: President Trey Traviesa, Former Patient Barbara Warren, CEO Bill Horne, Medical Director Dr. Michael Perry, Chief Surgeon Dr. James St. Louis and Chief Surgeon Dr. Michael Weiss

CEO Bill Horne comments, "We are thrilled to open a new facility in the beautiful southwest, where an active lifestyle is such a big part of the culture. When a patient is affected with chronic back and neck pain, it really takes a toll emotionally and physically. With LSI's new facility easily accessible to southwest and west coast residents, LSI's team of surgeons can help patients take back their lives and get back outdoors."



OSC Patient Lounge

LSI patients are welcomed into the warm and comforting ambiance of the 35,000 square foot center with state-of-the-art operating rooms, exam rooms, MRI imaging, physical therapy, café and family lounge.

[Watch the LSI 5-Day Process](#)



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Ask the Expert

Q: Why Hasn't LSI Published Medical Research?

A: Since opening its doors in 2005, LSI has performed over 9,000 procedures. Using this large patient population, LSI is currently taking the steps required to track and ultimately publish our outcomes in top-tier peer-reviewed medical journals. The protocol that LSI currently uses to monitor outcomes is as follows:



John Polikandriotis

A) A baseline score is established. Before surgery, patients are asked to fill out a survey that provides LSI with a pain score, a disability score and general health scores.

B) 2 weeks, 6 weeks, 12 weeks, 6 months, 1 year and 2 years after surgery, patients are contacted and asked to fill out the same survey questions.

C) With both sets of data, LSI can quantify improvements in pain, disability and general health, as well as monitor the time frame in which the patient was able to return to work and daily activities.

While we have performed many procedures, it takes time to collect enough data to meet the stringent and extensive requirements needed for a study to be accepted and published into a top-tier medical journal. Two of the main categories are described below.

The number of patients studied

The quality and significance of a research study largely depends upon the number of patients in the study. We

believe that presenting data on a large number of patients is far more relevant than presenting data on a small number of patients.

Outcomes

Long term outcomes - We believe that there is greater significance in presenting outcomes of patients months and years after surgery, rather than weeks.

Measuring proper outcomes - Outcomes that are measured should be important not only to the medical community, but also to patients. These include disability and pain improvements, quality of life improvements, time to return to work or daily activities and complications.

Publishing our ground breaking outcomes in top-tier peer-reviewed medical literature is a goal that LSI is working towards achieving in Q4 2009, since by that time we will have accumulated sufficient data.

[Read more of John's post on Bill's Blog](#)



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Laser Spine Institute Makes Medical Donation to Gridiron Greats

LSI is proud to announce a \$1 million gift has been given to the medical program of the Gridiron Greats Assistance Fund. Gridiron Greats is a charitable organization which provides financial aid, social and medical services to former NFL players in crisis. LSI's donation will benefit retired players suffering from chronic back and neck pain.



Chief spine surgeon Dr. James St. Louis explains, "We are thrilled and excited to offer much-needed surgeries to some of the NFL's greatest players. While they may not be actively playing anymore, we feel it is still vitally important for these players to be able to live out their retirement without suffering from chronic pain."



Gridiron Greats Board Member and legendary coach Mike Ditka agrees, "These players gave the best years of their lives to the game, and deserve the highest level of continuing medical care and assistance that we can provide them with. Thanks to the generosity and expertise of LSI, the Gridiron Greats will now be able to help many former players who are in desperate need of medical care. We want to extend a huge thank you to LSI for donating such important services to the Gridiron Greats medical program."

Spine-related pain is one of the leading medical issues for NFL players, yet no post-career care for neck or back pain

has been offered. LSI is offering retired NFL players in need of surgery an opportunity for a minimally invasive procedure.

Former patient and CEO of LSI Bill Horne says, "As someone who sustained an injury after playing one year of college football which has caused a lifetime of pain, I can only imagine what these retired NFL players are experiencing after decades playing the sport. This cause is close to our hearts, and we are genuinely thrilled about the opportunity to bring relief to these former players."

[Learn more about Gridiron Greats organization](#)



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Bean is Back and Healthier than Ever

LSI helped one of PGA Tour's veteran players, Andy Bean, find the relief he needed to get back in the game. Bean, a dominant player on the PGA Tour from 1977-1986 and a continuing winner on the Champions Tour, came to Laser Spine Institute for help. Unable to properly swing a club and grinding his teeth to get through a round of golf, Andy realized the pain was not only affecting his game, but his life as well. Without touching a golf club for two months, he made the decision to visit LSI for a consultation.



After a thorough evaluation by LSI physicians, Andy was given the treatment and medical advice he needed to get his swing back on tour. Following the advice of LSI, Andy made it back to the driving range for a full practice schedule a few weeks later. By his 20th shot, Andy's thoughts were, "you have got to be kidding" as he successfully swung his clubs without pain.



Weeks later, he secured his presence back on tour winning the Regions Charity Classic and Charles Schwab Cup Championship. Impressed by Laser Spine Institute's professionalism, Andy referred his father, among others, for treatment.

Laser Spine Institute has helped other PGA professionals like Peter Jacobsen and many other golfers get their game back.

[More Andy Bean coverage](#)



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Ask The Doctor

Q: While reading my MRI report, I noticed the words "bulging disc" written several times. What is a bulging disc and can LSI correct this condition?

A: As mentioned in the last issue of The Spinal Column, MRI reports can be difficult to read for an untrained eye. Bulging or herniated discs are a rather common condition among people who experience neck or back pain.



A bulging or herniated disc is simply a protrusion of disc material. Each disc in the spine is comprised of two parts: a soft inner core and a sturdy outer layer. Discs are often called the "shock absorbers" of the spine, keeping pressure off of the vertebrae. Any change in the disc structure caused by wear and tear, injury or trauma may result in a bulge, crack, or tear of the outer layer. For instance, pressure within the disc can push the inner core through the outer layer causing the disc to bulge or herniate. In both situations, the delicate spinal nerves are likely to be irritated, pinched, or trapped by invading disc material. In some cases, this substance can even protrude into the spinal canal, putting pressure on the spinal cord.

If a patient is not responding well to conservative treatment to relieve the pain, spine surgery may be a recommended option. LSI can perform a minimally invasive laser-assisted spine procedure called a Percutaneous Laser Discectomy to relieve symptoms caused by a disc condition. During this procedure, often referred to as a "PLD", a needle and an FDA-approved Holmium YAG laser are utilized to vaporize the soft disc tissue and cauterize, or seal the disc, to prevent the jelly-like substance from leaking. By sealing the disc, it shrinks and takes pressure off of the nerves and spinal cord which often relieves the painful symptoms. This LSI

technique is performed on an outpatient basis, which means less risks and shorter recovery time.

[Watch the animation of a Percutaneous Laser Discectomy procedure](#)

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Getting the Best Sleep with Back and Neck Pain

Discomfort at night is often a result of activities done during the day, resulting in increased inflammation and swelling in the affected joint. A comfortable night sleep is challenging with chronic pain. Sleeping posture and poor pillow and mattress support can also be a direct cause of neck and back pain during the night. To minimize back pain while you sleep, take note of your sleep position and ask yourself, "Where do I need support?"



For neck support, start by taking a look at your pillows, or lack thereof. Sleeping with your head propped up on several pillows, or with your head tilted back with no pillow support, places a prolonged strain on the ligaments on your neck joints. Sleeping for several hours in this position will become painful and last well into the following day. There are pillows on the market which have a roll support to place under your neck and a dip for the remainder of your head. Such pillows reinforce the natural curve of your neck. This may be effective for certain patients but may also result in compressing sensitive tissue for other neck problems. The right pillow is measured by waking up with minimal pain and stiffness in the morning.

In addition to having the right pillow, your mattress needs to provide proper firm support for your spine. Avoid soft, sagging or old mattresses as the ligaments in your back will be stretched when your body conforms to the sag of the mattress. Memory foam can be both supportive and forgiving for those who have prominent boney surfaces, osteoporosis, or back pain from injury or pathology.

Sleeping posture is also important for a good night sleep.

Lying on your stomach results in keeping your head turned to one side for several hours which places constant compression on certain joints and leads to stiffness and pain. Using a pillow between your legs, or a full body pillow while lying on your side, or placing a pillow under your knees while lying on your back, provides support and pain relief to back discomfort.

LSI Director of Physical Therapy Irene Rademeyer shares, "Our joint pain is often a result of how we have used or abused our spine during the day and can be well managed with a balance of rest, exercise and healthy postures and awareness." Being mindful of daily activities and posture in the evening prior to going to bed will result in a well rested night. Prolonged computer use or sitting while watching TV increases compressive levels and joint pain and inflammation.

[Visit the LSI Resource Center](#)



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