



Vol. 1

ADVANCED PAIN INSTITUTE

MONTHLY

POSITIVE SOLUTIONS TO PAIN

MEET THE STAFF

Meet the Staff of Advanced
Pain Institute

CHRONIC PAIN

Solutions by
the Experts

SPINAL CORD STIMULATION

Hope for Patients Who Have Not
Responded to Other Treatments

FREE
Take one and
feel better!



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If you are interested in a magazine for your practice contact Nick Ryan at Nick@XanthusServices.com

WELCOME

W

e hope you are having a relaxing, enjoyable summer. At Advanced Pain Institute and Comprehensive Neurological Solutions, we are dedicated and passionate about what we do, offering a range

of treatments and solutions, so please flip through this debut issue to learn more about our practice.

Louisiana during this time of year is hot and muggy, so make sure you stay hydrated! Be sure to check out “Happenings This Quarter” for some regional events. Despite the heat, there’s still a lot going on, whether you’re an art fanatic, a sports lover or an exercise enthusiast.

In this issue, you can also find out about spinal cord stimulation, an overview of neck pain, acupuncture and our new MRI clinic in Hammond.



Have a happy, healthy summer!

From our families to yours,
Advanced Pain Institute and
Comprehensive Neurological Solutions

ADVANCED PAIN INSTITUTE LOCATIONS:

COVINGTON

19345 Sunshine Ave
Covington, LA 70433

HAMMOND

42131 Veterans Ave, Suite 100
Hammond, LA 70403

DENHAM SPRINGS

303 Veterans Blvd, Suite A
Denham Springs, LA 70726

SLIDELL

1570 Lindberg Dr, Suite 6
Slidell, LA 70458

CONTACT US: 985-224-5680 or www.painexperts.com



Meet the staff of ADVANCED PAIN INSTITUTE

By Mohamed Elkersh, M.D.

Mohamed Elkersh, M.D.

Dr. Elkersh is board certified from The American Board of Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine. In 1998 he completed his surgical internship at Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, Florida and in 2002 he completed his Anesthesiology residency at the University of Miami. He then completed Pain Medicine fellowship training at Harvard Medical School. After practicing in Los Angeles for 18 months, he moved to Louisiana. He is currently holding faculty



**Harvard
Medical School**

appointments as clinical assistant professor in both the anesthesiology and neurology departments at Louisiana State University School of Medicine.

Barrett Johnston, M.D.

Dr. Barrett Johnston grew up on the Westbank of New Orleans. Since moving to the east coast to complete his residency in Anesthesiology and further enhance his medical training with a Fellowship in Pain Medicine, both at Harvard Medical School, he has longed to return



**Harvard
Medical School**

home to Louisiana.

Dr. Johnston joined the Advanced Pain Institute in Hammond in August 2011 as an Interventional Pain Medicine specialist.

Artemus Flagg II, M.D.

Dr. Artemus Flagg II grew up in Nashville, Tennessee. He served as a Battalion Flight Surgeon and Brigade Flight Surgeon during his combat tour in Iraq with the United States Army, 1st Cavalry Division. Following his combat tour he was promoted to the rank of Major and appointed as the Chief Flight Surgeon and Chief of the Physical Exam Section at the DiLorenzo TRICARE Health Clinic at the Pentagon.

He completed his residency in Anesthesiology and further enhanced his medical training with a Fellowship in Pain Medicine, both at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. During his training, he received the Clinical Anesthesia (One) resident of the year award for outstanding achievement in patient care and citizenship. He subsequently was selected as Chief Resident for the 2011-2012 academic year. Also during his residency training he served as Chair-Elect, Resident Component, American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine from 2010-2011 and Chair, Resident Component, American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine from 2011-2012. He is a member of the American Society of Anesthesiologists, the American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine, and the American Pain Society. He enjoys traveling, cooking, aviation, and is an avid sports enthusiast who loves the New Orleans Saints.



**Johns Hopkins University
School of Medicine**

Steve Lee, M.D.

Dr. Steve Lee is board certified from The American Board of Anesthesiology in Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine. He grew up in New York and is a graduate of the Washington University in St Louis School of Medicine. He completed both his residency and fellowship training at Harvard Medical School. He was excited to move to Louisiana to join the team of physicians at Advanced Pain Institute, explore the unique culture here, and live closer to family.



**Harvard
Medical School**

Eric I. Royster, M.D.

Dr. Royster received his Bachelor's Degree in Biology, with a minor in Chemistry, from the University of North Carolina. He then went on to study at the University of Arkansas, where he obtained his degree of Doctor of Medicine in 2003.

Following graduation, Dr. Royster moved to New Orleans, LA where he completed an Internship in Internal Medicine at Ochsner Clinic and Hospital. Dr. Royster's interest in pain medicine developed during his time at Ochsner and he continued there with his Residency in Anesthesiology. He further refined his expertise with a Fellowship in Pain Medicine at the University of New Mexico from July 2007 – June 2008. In August 2008, Dr. Royster returned to New Orleans, where he served as Medical Director of Ochsner Baptist Pain Center and Supervisor of the Residency Chronic Pain Education



**University of
New Mexico**

Program until opening his own practice, Integrated Pain and Neuroscience, in April 2013.

Dr. Royster is unique in his published expertise of both spinal cord stimulation and Intrathecal drug delivery. He is the pioneer in peripheral stimulation for headache and facial pain and also has expertise in non-surgical pain therapies. Dr. Royster is the first physician in the area to offer medical acupuncture and minimally invasive lumbar decompression.

David J. Dykes Jr FNP-C

David earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Southeastern Louisiana University of Hammond Louisiana, and earned his Master of Science degree from the University of South Alabama of Fairhope Alabama with a specialty in Family. He is board certified from the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. He is an active member of the Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners and the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. He has several years experience in surgical and trauma critical care nursing. David is a native of Livingston Parish and grew up enjoying the enriched culture of South Louisiana. David joined the Advanced Pain Institute team in January 2013.



**University of
South Alabama**

Comprehensive Neurological Solutions

Dr. Michael Fischer

Dr. Michael Fischer is a native of New Orleans, Louisiana. He attended Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center for medical school, where he subsequently completed his internship training in Internal Medical and residency training in Neurology. Dr. Fischer is also fellowship trained in Neuromuscular diseases and clinical neurophysiology. He has extensive experience in EMG's, nerve conduction studies and treatment of neuropathy, spinal disorders affecting the nerves, nerve injuries, inherited nerve disorders, brachial plexus disorders, diseases of the muscles and many other neuromuscular disorders.



**Louisiana
State University**

Dr. Anastasia Fischer

Dr. Anastasia Fischer is a native of Wisconsin who moved to New Orleans in 1997. Completed internships in both Psychiatry and Internal Medicine at Louisiana State University in New Orleans. She is also fellowship trained in Neuromuscular diseases and clinical neurophysiology, giving her expertise in the performance and interpretation of EMG and nerve conduction studies. In addition to her expertise in these areas, Dr. Fischer enjoys practicing general neurology as well.



**Louisiana
State University**

HAPPENINGS THIS QUARTER

August

The 20th Annual "Hot August Night" in Hammond takes place this year on August 14. The event features a wine stroll, art openings, retail stores staying open extra late with great bargains and restaurant and bar specials. The friendly atmosphere is a must-see for visitors and residents of the area, and live music performances will get you dancing.

For information, visit:
dddhammond.com

September

Fall in Baton Rouge is an exciting time for football fans. Join a tailgate for an LSU football game outside of Tiger Stadium or at one of the many bars and restaurants situated near the action. The schedule for September home games are as follows:
September 5 vs. McNeese State, 6:30 p.m.
September 19 vs. Auburn, 2:30 p.m.

For information, visit:
www.lsusports.net

October

The Sunset at the Landing Concert Series is a free, outdoor concert series held every third Friday through October 16 for family-friendly fun. Held on Covington's former Columbia Street boat landing, guests can take in the scenic view of the Bogue Falaya River while listening to live music. Guests are encouraged to bring picnic dinners, refreshments, blankets and lawn chairs. For information on performing artists, check www.sunsetatthelanding.org. The event takes place from 6-9 p.m.



Photo By: Steve Franz



SPINAL CORD STIMULATION

Offers Hope for Patients Who Have Not Responded to Other Treatments

For patients who have endured chronic pain in the neck, back, arms or legs; neuropathic pain (burning, tingling or numbing sensations); or inadequate surgeries, Advanced Pain Specialists offer an alternative solution that has proven to be quite successful for many of its patients: spinal cord stimulation (SCS), which was approved by the FDA in 1998. Think of it as analgesia “on demand.”

In a 2009 study published in the *Journal of Clinical*

Monitoring and Computing, researchers noted that it is “effective in reducing intensity, duration and frequency of pain experienced by the patient.”

How It Works

The SCS system consists of a pulse generator with remote controls, implanted to stimulate electrodes and conducting wires (known as “leads”) that connect the electrodes to the generator, which is similar to a pacemaker. To qualify for permanent implantation, a patient must undergo a trial period of about a week;

“Following the implantation of the permanent spinal cord stimulator device, patients can travel anywhere, and participate in most recreational activities, including swimming.”

– Artemus Flagg II, M.D.

during this time, a temporary stimulator device is implanted by the physician after a local anesthetic or sedative is administered.

The physician places the leads under the skin, guided by an X-Ray machine and a radiology technician. The leads are then attached to a small, hand-held generator that the patient can control. The generator then sends electrical pulses to the spinal cord, thus interfering with the nerve impulses that cause the feeling of pain.

The system replaces pain with a feeling of

“Spinal Cord Stimulation (SCS) is a minimally-invasive non-pharmacological approach to neuropathic and nociceptive pain, and has been shown to be an effective analgesic tool in patients suffering from chronic pain states such as failed back surgical syndrome (FBSS) or complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS). Since its first use for pain control in 1967, multiple studies have demonstrated its efficacy in the treatment of intractable, chronic pain with a variety of causes.”

– Artemus Flagg II, M.D.

massaging – or merely just the absence of pain. It can allow for reduced pain medication and help the patient improve mobility. Often times, patients experience relief immediately, though the leads may occasionally need to be adjusted for optimum performance.

You may be eligible for this treatment if you experience the following:

- Chronic back pain with or without leg pain
- Chronic neck pain with or without arm pain
- Prior back surgery (or surgeries) but pain remains (or worsens)
- Peripheral neuropathy
- Peripheral vascular disease
- Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD)
- Refractory angina
- Other treatments have not helped reduce your pain



Artemus Flagg II, M.D.



AN OVERVIEW OF NECK PAIN

Most people will experience neck pain at some point in their lives, and roughly 10 percent of the world's population experiences neck pain each year. The spine is divided into three parts: lumbar (lower); thoracic (middle) and the cervical area, which includes the first 10 vertebra of the spine. This area is responsible for supporting the head, allowing for movement and rotation of the neck.

Because it is able to rotate, flex and tilt, it can become a vulnerable place for a sprain or injury. Spinal pain is among the most common entity encountered by the staff at Advanced Pain Institute. Neck pain can be a significant source of discomfort for many patients and may be related to muscle, nerve, bone, joint, arthritic or disc problems.

Muscle Strains

Triggers for the onset of neck

muscle straining can be traced to several common activities, so be mindful of your day-to-day antics if you experience neck pain. If you hunch over a computer or a steering wheel, carry heavy objects on one side of your body (like a large purse or briefcase), cradle a phone in the crook of your neck while multi-tasking or even sleep on a pillow that's too firm, that could likely be the culprit leading to discomfort. Most minor strains of

ligaments, tendons and muscles in the neck can heal within a day or so.

Common cures for this include icing the sore area to reduce the inflammation; applying heat to increase blood flow; over-the-counter medications like Ibuprofen or Advil (anti-inflammation) or Tylenol (a pain reliever). Massages may also help. If the stiffness or pain in the neck lasts for more than a day or two, it is recommended to see a professional.

Disks and Nerves

If you experience neck pain that radiates down the arm – and sometimes into the hands and fingers – it is likely caused by a cervical herniated disk or foraminal stenosis pinching a nerve in the neck. When a patient has a symptomatic herniated disk, the disk itself isn't painful – but the material that leaks out from inside the disk pinches or irritates a nearby nerve. This produces radicular pain (nerve root pain), which may radiate to other parts of the body.

Foraminal stenosis is the narrowing of the cervical disk space caused by enlargement of a joint in the spinal canal, usually caused by one nerve root on one side. Symptoms include non-continuous pain developing slowly over the years and can be traced back to a specific physical activity or sleeping position.

If you suffer from neck or upper back pain that travels to your extremities, a possible solution would be an epidural injection to provide relief. The epidural injection procedure involves the X-ray guided injection of medications, usually a pain reliever (anesthetic) and an anti-inflammatory (steroid) into an area called the epidural space. The epidural space is just outside the spinal cord and very close to the nerves of the spine. The medications injected into the epidural space reduce inflammation in the spinal nerves as well as block the pain signals from reaching the brain. Other treatment plans may include acupuncture, physical therapy, chiropractic therapy or massage, so talk to your physician to figure out what's best for you if you suffer from this ailment.

Arthritic Neck Issues and Bone Spurs

Bone spurs (osteophytes) often form where bones meet each other – in your joints. They can also form on the bones of your spine. They are mainly caused by damage associated with osteoarthritis, a condition marked by the degeneration and breakdown of the cartilage between the facet joints in the cervical spine. This is uncommon in patients under the age of 60. Bone

spurs may be asymptomatic and can go undetected for years. They don't always require treatment. But depending on where they are situated, they can affect your health and cause pain. Some patients with bone spurs may experience a dull pain, especially while standing up. In some cases the pain occurs in the shoulders or causes headaches. It can be treated with rest, pain medication and chiropractic therapy.

Trauma, Injury and Whiplash

Neck pain can be caused by whiplash from a car accident or a fall in which one lands on top of the head. Whiplash can also occur from sudden movement or any impact or blow that causes one's neck to jerk forward or backward, because the sudden force stretches and tears at the neck tendons. Symptoms include pain, a decreased range of motion and tightness in the neck with a feeling of hard or knotted neck muscles; tenderness; headaches at the base of the skull; and pain when rocking your head from side to side or backward and forward. It is recommended that one suffering from whiplash ice the area to reduce the pain and swelling; speak to a physician about proper medication; apply moist heat to the neck after icing it. Some physicians may recommend the use of a neck brace, as well.



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ACUPUNCTURE

A viable solution for chronic pain

For many patients dealing with chronic pain and / or neurological conditions, acupuncture is an alternative way of mitigating or alleviating symptoms. It's a key component of traditional Chinese medicine, but in

recent years has risen in popularity in the West.

Dr. Eric Royster, at Advanced Pain Institute, has many years of working with chronic pain patients. "Pain truly is a puzzle," he says. "The challenge for the physician is to take a look at all the components which



are causing the patient's pain. The key to determine all the avenues I can offer – which can make all the pieces work together – is to alleviate pain. For this reason, when assessing my patients, I explore all options ranging from medication, therapy, injection to acupuncture."

Acupuncture involves the insertion of extremely thin needles through the skin at strategic points on the body and is a technique that intends to balance the flow of energy or life force, known as chi or qi. Acupuncturists believe that this life force flows through pathways, or meridians, in the body and that by inserting needles into the specific points, it can rebalance the energy flow.

Many doctors in the West view the acupuncture points as stimulation points for nerves, muscles and connective tissue. The stimulation can boost the body's natural pain response and increase blood flow. It is commonly used for dental pain, fibromyalgia, headaches – both tension and migraine headaches, labor pain, lower back pain, neck pain, osteoarthritis and more. It can also alleviate psychological ailments such as insomnia.

Typically, there are no side effects. Occasionally the patients' symptoms will worsen for a few days or other changes in appetite, sleep, bowel or urination patterns or emotional state may be triggered. However, these are positive signs that the acupuncture is starting to work.

The challenge for the physician is to take a look at all the components which are causing the patient's pain.

According to Dr. Royster, the number of treatments vary depending on the person and the condition, but often results can be seen after just one round of acupuncture. He says that the needles are so thin that patients rarely feel pain with their insertion. Once the needles are in place, there is no experience of pain. "It is my personal mission to utilize my years of professional training as a physician to achieve emotional, mental and physical balance," says Dr. Royster. "When my patients reach this level, they are able to enjoy more out of life."

For more information, talk to your physician to see if this is a good option for you.

Talk to your physician to find out more and to calculate risks involved in this procedure.



Eric I. Royster, M.D.

InVision Imaging

Now available at Advanced Pain Institute’s Hammond location, at 42131 Veterans Ave., Suite 100.

It’s a type of MRI, magnetic resonance imaging, which allows physicians to look inside the body without the use of surgery, harmful dyes or X-rays. The device uses magnets, radio waves and computers to produce very clear pictures or images of the human anatomy which can often lead to an efficient diagnosis. MRI technology depicts soft tissue anatomy far better than any other diagnostic testing equipment.

MRI is capable of taking detailed pictures of soft-tissue structures near and around bones, and it is ideal for spinal and joint problems. Widely used to diagnose sports-related injuries, especially those affecting the knee, shoulder, hip, elbow and wrist, MRI images allow physicians to see very small tears and injuries to ligaments and muscles.

At InVision Imaging, physicians take pride in the



fact that appointments are easy to schedule, and staff makes sure to accommodate patients’ unique needs and concerns. For those suffering from anxiety about the procedure, InVision Imaging can provide sedation services when necessary. All MRI’s are performed from the brain down to the toes.

For information on how to prepare for your visit please visit www.invisionmri.com/prepare-for-your-visit. Contact InVision Imaging at (985) 269-7600.

PUZZLE

How to play Sudoku

To solve a Sudoku puzzle you have to use the numbers 1-9 to fill in the blank spaces so that each row, each column and each 3 x 3 square has all the numbers 1-9 appearing once. The only thing you need to solve a Sudoku number place puzzle is logic. You don’t need any mathematical knowledge. In the easier puzzles you may be able to see straight away where a particular number goes. Focusing on one particular blank square at a time, scan its row, column & block.

8	7		4			5		
	1		5					4
5					3			
3				8			9	
7		1	9		5	8		6
	9			4				3
			2					5
1					9		4	
		7			6		3	1



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We have the neurological expertise and knowledge to treat all of the varied diseases and disorders that can affect the brain, spinal cord, nerves and muscles. We pride ourselves on understanding not only the medical side of our patient's problems, but how these problems can affect their day to day lives and their families as well.

Diagnosis & Treatment:

Back Pain, Neck Pain, Headaches, Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Lou Gehrigs Disease (ALS), Migraines, Seizures, Neuropathy, Concussions, Pinched Nerve, Traumatic Brain Injury, Stroke, Parkinson's Disease, Dementia, and Spinal Cord Abnormalities

Procedures:

Nerve Conduction Studies, EMG's, Botox, and Occipital Nerve Blocks



Anatasia Fischer, MD
Michael Fischer, MD
Ashley Bratton, FNP-C

Covington

19345 Sunshine Ave
Covington, LA 70433

Hammond

42131 Veterans Ave, Ste 100
Hammond, LA 70403

Slidell

1570 Lindberg Dr, Ste 6
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Easing pain, enhancing lives

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Take one and
feel better!



Our world class team of physicians are highly trained from some of the top universities such as **Harvard, Johns Hopkins, University of New Mexico, and LSU**

P (985) 224-5680

F (985) 345-7249

info@painexperts.com

PainExperts.com

ComprehensiveNeurologicalSolutions.com



Covington

19345 Sunshine Ave
Covington, LA 70433

Hammond

42131 Veterans Ave,
Suite 100
Hammond, LA 70403

Denham Springs

303 Veterans Blvd, Suite A
Denham Springs, LA 70726

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1570 Lindberg Dr, Suite 6
Slidell, LA 70458