

# INSTITUTE FOR NERVE MEDICINE



## **VIDEO AND PHOTOS AVAILABLE: Cedars Sinai Medical Center, UCLA and the Institute for Nerve Medicine: Breakthrough Medical Findings Provide Answers To Back Pain Sufferers**

*Revolutionary Medical Report published in the February issue of The Journal of Neurosurgery: Spine - Findings In A Revolutionary Medical Report From Doctors At UCLA, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center And The Institute For Nerve Medicine Reveal That New Technology Better Diagnoses And Treats Back Pain Sufferers With Sciatica*

For Immediate Release

LOS ANGELES, Calif./EWorldWire/Feb. 3, 2005 --- In a report that may revolutionize the treatment of more than a million cases of sciatica (radiating leg pain) each year, investigators from Cedars Sinai Medical Center, UCLA and the Institute for Nerve Medicine in Los Angeles, California report today in the Journal of Neurosurgery - Spine that new technology can accomplish the reliable effective diagnosis and treatment of piriformis syndrome and other causes of sciatica that do not involve a herniated lumbar disc.

The paper, entitled: "Sciatica of Non-Disc Origin & Piriformis Syndrome: Diagnosis by MR Neurography and Interventional MRI with Outcome Study of Resulting Treatment" addresses the current problem of a nearly 80% failure rate for diagnosis using standard methods. The study involved 240 patients followed for up to seven years.

The most common cause for sciatica in the study proved to be a diagnosis called "piriformis syndrome" - one of several disorders the investigators report on that arise due to entrapment of the sciatic nerve in the area of the hip. Currently, the report says, when a patient experiences painful persistent sciatica - pain radiating down the leg - physicians often look only for a herniated lumbar disk relying upon lumbar MRI scanning. Surgery for the disk herniation is often carried out to treat the sciatica.

Most spine specialist consider piriformis syndrome to be extremely rare. However, the authors conclude that although it is rarely diagnosed, it is actually a common cause of sciatica - possibly as common as the well known herniated disk syndromes.

Although 1.5 million lumbar MRI scans are carried out each year for sciatica (at a cost of about \$1.5 billion), only about 300,000 (20%) reveal a herniated disk amenable to surgery. About 1/3rd of the surgeries fail to relieve the sciatica. As a consequence, about 1.2 million (80%) receive no clear diagnosis and 100,000 have spine surgery that fails.

The new report includes a diagnostic efficacy study showing that MR Neurography (a new method for imaging the sciatic nerve) has a 93% specificity for identifying piriformis syndrome. Treatments involved new technology employing Open MRI real time image guidance for injection therapy as well as a new minimal access outpatient surgery technique. Good and excellent outcomes were over 80% in a group of patients that typically have extremely poor outcomes.

For a copy of this breakthrough report, media can e-mail [afiller@nervemed.com](mailto:afiller@nervemed.com).

Media interested in interviewing Dr. Aaron Filler, M.D. can call Charles Barrett, The Barrett Company Communications, in Los Angeles at 310-471-5764 or by cell at 323-595-5941.

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**KEYWORDS:** Medicine, Technology, Patents, Neurosurgery, Imaging, Sciatica, Back Pain, UCLA, Medical Advance

**SOURCE:** Publicist, Cedars Sinai Medical Center

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