

Spinal Cord Stimulators: L&I Policy



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Question before the committee:

Does the Turner et al. study from the University of Washington provide evidence to change the Department's existing non-coverage policy for Spinal Cord Stimulators?



Overview

- Brief review of L&I's policy and the SCS study.
- Materials provided in advance to the committee:
 - UW Final Report.
 - Dr. Turner's slides from the October 16, 2008 IIMAC meeting.
 - Materials submitted by the Neuromodulation Therapy Access Coalition.
- Dr. Turner is present today to assist with any study related questions the committee might have.
- Public comments will follow this presentation.



Overview

- September 30, 2008 Final Report of the SCS study delivered to L&I.

URL: <http://www.lni.wa.gov/ClaimsIns/Files/OMD/FinalReportSCS.pdf>

- Dr. Turner presented study findings to the IIMAC on October 16, 2008.
- A letter from the Neuromodulation Therapy Access Coalition was included for the IIMAC to consider related to SCS discussions.



SCS Treatment: Background

Spinal Cord Stimulators (SCS) are implantable devices used to treat:

- Chronic neck and back pain,
- Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS),
- Ischemic pain.



SCS Treatment: Background

- Involves insertion of electrodes into the epidural space.
- Electrodes are connected to a surgically implanted pulse generator.
- Electrical impulses generated are thought to inhibit the conduction of pain signals to the brain.



L&I Policy Background

- L&I has an existing non-coverage policy for spinal cord stimulators for any condition.
- Our concern has been with:
 - Efficacy with regard to pain and function.
 - Lack of sustained improvement over time.
 - Complications.



L&I Policy Background

- Agreed to study SCS in injured workers with FBSS due to a lack of published evidence generalizable to injured workers.
- Study began in 2004 and collected effectiveness data from injured workers in Washington State.
- L&I agreed to allow continued access to SCS, once the study was fully enrolled, for IWs meeting same study criteria until the study analysis concluded.



UW Study

Design: A non-randomized prospective cohort study.

Purpose: To evaluate the outcomes of injured workers with FBSS who received at least a trial of SCS, compared with:

- Injured workers who were referred to a multidisciplinary pain clinic, and with
- Injured workers who received usual care.



UW Study

To participate in the SCS arm of the study:

- The injured worker's physician requested SCS through the utilization review vendor.
- Requests for IWs meeting criteria were forwarded to the University of Washington researchers.
- UW contacted IWs by telephone to confirm eligibility and obtain patient consent.



UW Study

- All treatment was directed by the IW's physician.
- L&I's administrative database was used to identify IWs for a usual care comparison group.
- A pain clinic comparison group was prospectively identified from referrals for authorization for pain clinic treatment.
- UW researchers collected data via phone interviews and from L&I administrative databases as described in the Final Report.



Number of Requests for SCS

Year	Study	Non-study	Total
2005	84	-	84
2006	69	-	69
2007	35	57	92
2008	0	114	114
Total	188	171	359



L&I Policy Today

- Effective November 10, 2008, L&I stopped providing continued access to SCS.
- Based this decision on the original intent to allow access until the study was completed, and
 - Results presented from the Final Report, and
 - Increasing volume of requests.
- L&I submitted SCS to the State Health Technology Assessment Program for broader review related to all health agencies.



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