

Title: Spine Surgery: A Reasonable Option for Management of Cervical Radiculopathy

Author: Eddie Mairura, MS-3

Date: November 26th, 2009

Key words: Radiculopathy, Cervical Radiculopathy, Physiotherapy, Cervical Collar, Conservative Management, Spine Surgery

Abstract: Cervical Radiculopathy symptoms of pain, numbness, tingling or weakness of upper extremities as a result of either disc herniation or degenerative changes that occur on the spine. This pamphlet outlines what cervical radiculopathy is and options that one might have to resolve the symptoms.

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Primary Care Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up to date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.

WHAT IS CERVICAL RADICULOPATHY ?

Pain or numbness that occurs around the neck or shoulder and travels down to different parts of the arm, hand and finger tips.

SYMPTOMS

- Pain
- Numbness
- Tingling
- Weakness

CAUSES

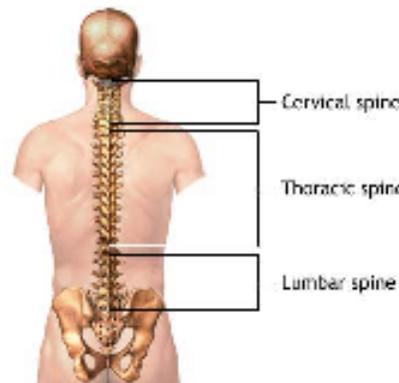
- Disc Herniation
- Bone spurs
- Loss of height

Bulging disc pressing on nerve



Herniated Disc: One of the causes of cervical radiculopathy

SPINE ANATOMY



DIAGNOSIS

- Doctors can often diagnose cervical radiculopathy based on the signs and symptoms.
- However, further imaging is sometimes used. This involves using a CT scan or MRI . This is done to determine the cause of the cervical radiculopathy.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Treatment Summary: There is no good evidence on the best course of treatment. Often the options are fall into two categories as follows:

1. Conservative Management: This involves a combination of pain medications, muscle relaxers, physiotherapy/physical therapy, or cervical collar. This is the approach that most doctors start with before surgery can be considered as an option.

2. Surgical Management: This is done if patients are not getting any better. This involves surgery performed by a spine surgeon or neurosurgeon. It involves removing the vertebral disc, joining the vertebrae or opening the space that nerves travel through .

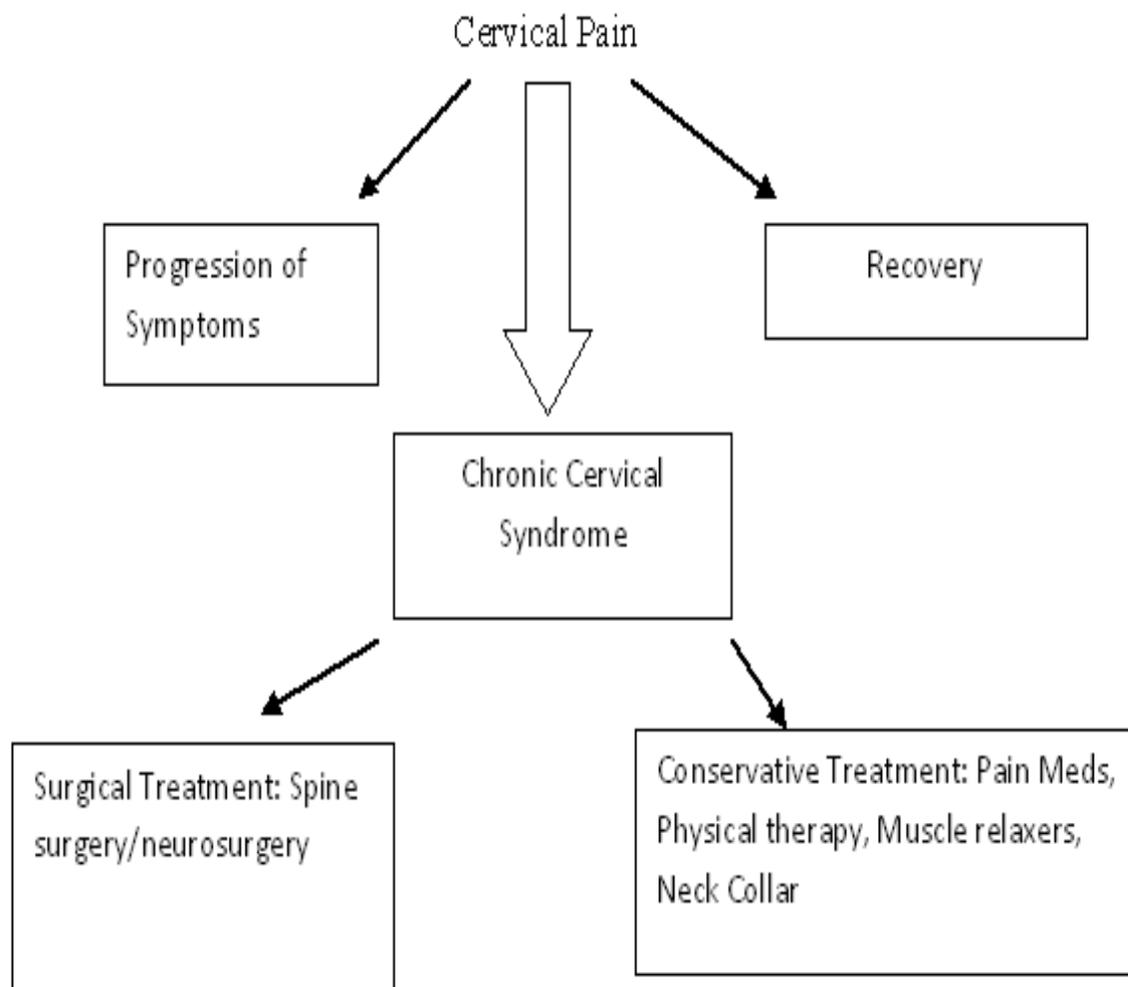
CERVICAL RADICULOPATHY

Patient Education Tool (PET)

University of Minnesota Primary
Care Clerkship

Developed by Edward M. Mairura, MS-3

SUMMARY



IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS:

Please contact your doctor for more information.

Person L.C.G, et al. (1997) ‘ Cervical radiculopathy: pain, muscle weakness and sensory loss in patients with cervical radiculopathy treated with surgery, physiotherapy or cervical collar. *European Spine Journal* . 6:256-266

Sloane, P.D. et. Al “Essentials of Family Medicine”. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. 5th Edition . Philadelphia, PA 2008.

<http://www.eorthopod.com>

<http://health.allrefer.com>

<http://spectrum2105.com>