

Pain Diagnostics and Interventional Care

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Dr. Provenzano (left) pictured at the 20th ASRA Annual Pain Medicine Meeting. Medical conferences are an important facet of medicine that allow for the sharing of ideas, continued education, and the advancement of subspecialty fields such as Pain Management.

In this issue:

We will provide background information on a common source of pain that is often described as merely “low back pain”. Sacroiliac joint pain is a bothersome, but often treatable condition that can mimic other common pain conditions. Identifying the root cause of your pain is essential for choosing the most effective treatment options.



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Sacroiliac Joint Pain

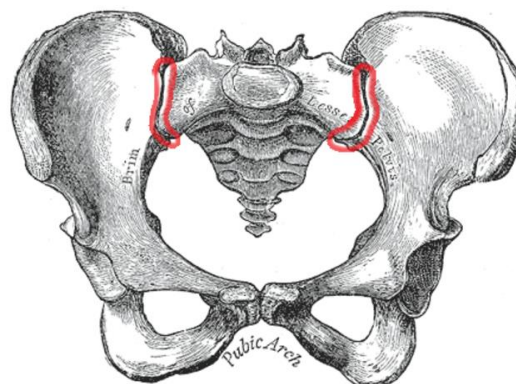
Diagnosing Sacroiliac Joint Pain

Back pain can originate in many different areas. Like stomach pain, the first step in treating back pain is determining where the pain is emanating from. This is because many common conditions can cause non-specific low back pain. For example, sacroiliac (SI) joint pain can mimic the symptoms of sciatica or lumbar spine pain. Approximately 15-30% of low back pain cases can be contributed to the SI joint.

The steps involved in the diagnosis of SI joint pain include obtaining a medical history, completing a physical exam, and ruling out other possible pain conditions. In addition, radiographic images will often be obtained.

Through a physical exam, the healthcare provider will perform diagnostic tests to determine what might be causing a patient’s pain. It is common for a patient with SI joint pain to have tenderness over this region. Although this does not rule out other spinal pathologies, it can lead a physician to consider SI joint pain.

It is crucial for a physician to rule out other pain conditions, such as hip arthritis, pinched nerves in the back (i.e., sciatica), or facet joint arthritis. By eliminating other potential pain generators, the physician can come to the diagnosis of SI joint pain and begin treatment. Since these other conditions can cause similar symptoms, it is important to identify the correct source of the pain to create the most effective treatment plan.



Recent Publication

Congratulations to Dr. Provenzano and previous clinical research coordinator, Jozef Leech, on their recent publication in *Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine*! Their article analyzed the significance of the second lumbar medial branch block as a diagnostic tool prior to radiofrequency ablation.

Provenzano, DA, Leech JE, Kilgore, JS, Sugden LA. Evaluation of lumbar medial branch blocks: how does the second block influence progression to radiofrequency ablation? *Reg Anesth Pain Med.* 2002 Jul 27.

Mission Statement

To professionally and passionately provide evidence-based medical care for patients with various pain states and to advance the science of pain medicine through research and education.

Contact Us

To learn more, please visit our website
DavidProvenzanoMD.com.

References:

Cohen, S. P., Chen, Y., and Neufled, J. N. Sacroiliac joint pain: a comprehensive review of epidemiology, diagnosis, and treatment. *Expert Rev Neurother.* 2013 Jan; 13(1): 99 – 116. doi: 10.1586/ern.12.148.

SI joint injection, fusion, and RFA: Created with BioRender.com

Treatment Options

Treatment for SI joint pain should be approached in a stepwise manner. The least invasive methods, such as physical therapy and chiropractic care, often lead to significant pain reductions. If the SI joint pain is not relieved through these treatments, injections and surgical options can be considered. We will work with you to develop a treatment plan that works best for your situation.

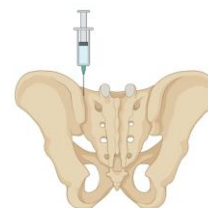
Physical therapy / Chiropractic care

The first step in most treatment plans is often physical therapy or chiropractic care because of their effectiveness and non-invasive nature. Working with a physical therapist or chiropractor to strengthen the surrounding muscles can improve joint stability and decrease pain without the need for procedures.



Sacroiliac joint injections

Steroid injections can help to reduce inflammation around the SI joint which in turn, leads to pain relief and improvements in function.



Sacroiliac joint Radiofrequency ablation

A special needle is used to heat the nerves surrounding the SI joint and leads to the reduction in pain by stopping the signal. Pain relief is expected to last 12-18 months. This procedure requires diagnostic blocks to confirm the source of the pain prior to proceeding.



Sacroiliac joint fusion

Fusions can reduce pain by decreasing the instability of the joint. This treatment option is reserved for patients with severe SI joint pain that does not respond to more conservative treatment options.



Understanding Pain

Pain can have a debilitating effect on one's life, stipulated by interference with daily activities, decreased independence, and withdrawal from interactions with family and friends. Pain can also affect a person's sleep cycle and interfere with work and

professional activities. Dr. Provenzano and his team will work with you to identify and alleviate these issues and provide a personalized and thorough pain management and treatment plan.