

CASE STUDY: Left Arm Pain

Indications/Patient Presentation

- 48years of age – female.
- Patient complains of severe left arm pain radiating down the forearm and left hand with symptoms of numbness and tingling sensation.
- Pain developed (2) months earlier and her primary physician ordered anti-inflammatory and muscle relaxers which did not control the pain or improve the condition.
- Patient complains that weakness of left upper extremities are becoming worse and to the degree that she cannot work anymore and therefore came to the office for further evaluation.

Objective Findings:

- Patient showed significant weakness in her left tricep muscle as well as left wrist flexor test (bending the wrist forward).
- Patient also experienced dense numbness involving her left index finger and middle finger.
- A marked decreased left tricipital reflex was demonstrated.

Assessment:

- Cervical brachial pain
- Cervical radiculopathy
- Possible C6/C7 level Nerve Root Compression

A cervical spine MRI was ordered and upon review the results showed:

- Mild cervical arthritis and a large disc herniation on the left side of C6 and C7 level impinging on the spinal cord and nerve root.

Treatment

- Treatment plan to include a very short course of pain medication and NSAIDS that were prescribed until referral to neurosurgeon could occur:
 - Oxycodone 5ml - 325
 - Acetaminophen
- Physical Therapy was also prescribed and patient was referred to a neurosurgeon for further consultation based upon the abnormal MRI.

Follow-up:

- Neurosurgeon considered patient as a good candidate for immediate surgery and the patient was subsequently hospitalized. An anterior cervical discectomy of C6 and C7 levels was performed. Surgery also included fusion of the discs involving removal of the disc from the front of the neck and replacement with bone graft and placement of a plate to stabilize the area.
- After the surgery patient came back to present office for prescribed physical therapy.

Outcome:

- After (2) months the patient has complete relief from arm pain and has regained full strength and sensation in her arm.