

SPINAL CORD STIMULATOR FOR COMPLEX REGIONAL PAIN SYNDROME; HOW LONG IS IT EFFECTIVE?

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Background: The spinal cord stimulation (SCS) is known to be effective for managing the pain from complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS). However, many patients still complain their severe pain even after the SCS implantation and there is limited information about how long the SCS is effective in the CRPS patients. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effect duration of SCS for CRPS by measuring the pre and post-SCS medication cost and pain scores of CRPS patients who received the SCS implantation.

Methods and Materials: The daily medication cost and the visual analogue scale (VAS) scores of pre and post-SCS implantation were analyzed in the consecutive CRPS patients who received SCS from January 2005 to December 2010. The pre-SCS state of the patients was set as a standard value; the post-SCS state was compared at post 1 month, 2 month, 3 month, and every 6 months up to 36 months. **Results:** Total 22 patients were included in this study. The VAS scores were reduced after SCS implantation and returned to the pre-SCS state after 18 months. The Kaplan-Meier analysis showed the mean duration effect of SCS was 14 months. However, the daily medication cost was not decreased even after the SCS implantation

Conclusions: The SCS seems to be effective no more than 18 months for managing pain in CRPS patients. However, the medication costs are not reduced even after the SCS implantation compared to the pre-implantation state.