

A Longitudinal Study of Low Back Pain

Terrell Benold, David Schneider, Richard Young, John Whitham Study in Progress.

Purpose: RRNeT has identified and enrolled 258 family medicine patients with chronic low back pain into a longitudinal study. Over four years, we will examine changes in use of opioid medicines, pain severity, health outcomes, and disability.

Study Aims: (1) examining changes in opioid dose from 2008 to 2009; and assessing whether these changes are associated with changes in pain, functioning, and health status; (2) examining the natural history of procedural interventions, and the resulting long-term impact on pain, functioning, health outcomes, and opioid dosing.

3) examining the dynamics by which patients initiate,escalate,or withdraw from prescribed opioids;

Subjects: are 258 adults with chronic low back pain of greater than 3 months duration,who have visited the clinic more than one time.

Outcome Measures: include change in opioid dose (primary outcome) and pain severity,health, and functional status, as measured by the MOS Short-Form-36 (secondary outcomes).

Design: Investigators initiated a prospective cohort study of patients with chronic low back pain in 2008 and enlisted student research assistants to administer surveys and review medical records in seven RRNeT practices in Texas. This project will continue to collect data from patients who agreed to be followed longitudinally over five years. The participating residency programs will each maintain contact with their study subjects, administer brief surveys, and examine subjects' medical records.

This Year: Medical students collected information from 228 back patients and researched topics ranging from impact of procedures to alleviate pain, opiod use and health outcomes, substance abuse, mental health and pain among diverse back pain patients.