

AVOID OPEN SURGERY

For some patients, this minimally invasive procedure provides an effective alternative to open back surgery.

TRINITY SPINE CENTER

VICTOR M. HAYES, MD
FARHAN N. SIDDIQI, MD



FHCN PHOTO BY BRIAN GLENN

Angelo Ferreira found a welcome alternative to open back surgery with the specialists at Trinity Spine Center. "I'm back to fishing with no problems," he says. "It's phenomenal."

"I had just come back from fishing," recalls Evangelo "Angelo" Ferreira. "I went to wash my boat, and I almost ended up falling on my knees. I was in such pain, it was crazy."

Angelo says he wasn't sure what had caused his injury, but the pain persisted.

"I stayed home for a couple of days and figured it would go away," he continues. "Then, when I was walking down the stairs, my legs buckled on me and I fell. I said to my wife, *I guess it's time to go to the doctor.*"

While Angelo admits to having intermittent back trouble in the past, this pain seemed to originate in his hips.

"That was the first time I felt it in my hips. I thought, *I need new hips all of a sudden!*" he shares. "Turns out it wasn't my hips."

Angelo went to the Community Hospital in New Port Richey, where he was referred to Drs. Victor Hayes and Farhan Siddiqi, board-certified spine surgeons with the hospital-affiliated Trinity Spine Center. After examining him, Dr. Siddiqi revealed that Angelo had severely ruptured a disc in his back, causing the pain and numbness in his hips.

"Dr. Siddiqi was very nice," Angelo confirms. "I felt comfortable talking to him. I told him that my son's a physician in Sarasota, and I asked him, *If it was your dad, what would you do?*"

Dr. Siddiqi assured him that he

would use every tool at his disposal to relieve Angelo's pain and help him to enjoy life again.

Every option

"Both Dr. Siddiqi and I are double fellowship-trained spine specialists, experienced in a comprehensive range of treatments," says Dr. Hayes. "At Trinity Spine Center, we want to heal patients with the most minimally invasive treatment possible."

"Though Dr. Hayes and I are surgeons," Dr. Siddiqi comments, "we are also very conservative. We see surgery as a last option."

Initially, Dr. Siddiqi treated Angelo with a host of conservative treatments, including therapy, medicine, bracing, and an epidural steroid injection to calm the pain from his herniated disc. While effective in the short term, it became apparent that Angelo would require surgery to fully recover.

"In the case of a herniated disc, there are two surgeries that are routinely done," Dr. Siddiqi explains. "For a minor herniation, we may perform a microdiscectomy. This is an open surgical procedure but on a smaller scale than the standard open surgery."

Because Angelo's herniation was large – with the rupture spreading to the outside of his spine – Dr. Siddiqi knew that he would not be a candidate for the smaller surgery.

"Angelo's case was more complicated – the kind that normally requires a major surgical procedure," the doctor continues. "In order to reach the ruptured disc, we would need to take apart the joint. We then would need to reconstruct the spine, which involves putting screws into the back. This is known as a fusion procedure."

A spinal fusion, such as Angelo required, involves a higher risk of surgical complications, along with months of recovery. For Angelo, however, Dr. Siddiqi suggested a third option.

Welcome alternative

"My partner and I also perform what is known as the YESS procedure, which is a laser-assisted endoscopic discectomy," says Dr. Siddiqi. "In this procedure, we make a small opening in the skin, about six or seven millimeters, and we are able to guide a camera through that opening to reach both inside and outside the spine. This allows us to go around the joint instead of having to remove it. Instead of drilling a hole in Angelo's joint, we are able to gently place the camera through a natural opening in the spine."

During the procedure, the surgeon introduces a laser and instruments through the camera in order to remove the herniation. Because the surgery is relatively minor, it is performed under

minimal, or *twilight*, sedation, often as an outpatient procedure.

"When it is appropriate, this is a great option for our patients," Dr. Siddiqi confirms. "There is virtually no scarring, and recovery time is far less than with a large, open surgery. Patients get back to their lives sooner and with much less pain. If you look at the published literature with regard to this procedure, people return to work in twenty-eight days on average."

Back to life

Angelo confirms that, since undergoing the minimally invasive procedure in the summer of 2008, his recovery has been swift, with lasting pain relief.

"Dr. Siddiqi made everything easy," he says of the operation. "It was nothing. You go to sleep, you wake up, and you're fine. I didn't have any therapy at all. I didn't need it."

Of course, Angelo notes, not everyone believes how simple his recovery has been . . . himself included.

"I was a little nervous," he admits. "You hear all of these things about back surgery, but this has been a pretty good experience. I just can't believe it. I went in there in such pain, and now I'm back to fishing with no problems. Dr. Siddiqi says, *Just do what you want to do.*"

"It's phenomenal." FHCN—Raechelle L. Wilson

For more information on Trinity Spine Center, please visit
www.trinity-spine.com



Victor M. Hayes, MD, is a board-certified spine surgeon and is fellowship-trained in both endoscopic spinal surgery and reconstructive spinal surgery. Dr. Hayes received his medical degree from Cornell University Medical College and completed his internship and residency at Long Island Jewish Medical Center. Dr. Hayes is a member of the North American Spine Society, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, and the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgeons.



Farhan N. Siddiqi, MD, is a board-certified spine surgeon and is fellowship-trained in both endoscopic spinal surgery and reconstructive spinal surgery. Dr. Siddiqi holds an MS in Biochemistry from the University of Rochester and received his medical degree from Cornell University Medical College. He completed his internship and residency at Long Island Jewish Medical Center and is a member of the North American Spine Society, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, and the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

More knowledge, more care

"It's important for people who suffer from back pain to get a specialist's opinion," Dr. Hayes stresses. "Patients need to understand all of their options so that they do not suffer for a long time or become too reliant on potentially addictive pain medications."

Dr. Siddiqi concurs, noting that many patients with back problems are tempted to treat only the pain. He is careful to point out that medication is

not always the best solution and can even make a back problem worse by masking a degenerating condition.

"Dr. Siddiqi and I attend all procedures together," Dr. Hayes adds, "so our patients have two surgeons involved in their care. We have the same specialized training and have been working together since medical school. That kind of camaraderie and cooperative expertise is something few other practices can offer."

Don't let pain control your life...

Dr. Siddiqi and Dr. Hayes are spine specialists trained in the most advanced reconstructive and minimally invasive techniques available today. The goal of Trinity Spine Center is to reserve major reconstructive spinal surgery as a last option and strive to improve patients' lives with the least amount of surgery possible. For more information, please call (727) 372-9922 for the office located at 8849 Hawbuck St. in Trinity. Trinity Spine Center will be opening a new state-of-the-art facility in early 2009.