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NAME: Hannah
AGE: 35

REASON TO CONTACTING BEST DOCTORS

Looking for further treatment options to help with her back pain

BEST DOCTORS EXPERT SPECIALTY:
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

“ From start to finish I received regular updates from the Best Doctors team and the final report continued four whole pages describing treatment suggestions and the expert’s opinion about my condition. ”

DIAGNOSIS CONFIRMED AND ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT OPTIONS EXPLAINED BY BEST DOCTORS EXPERT

Hannah had been experiencing back pain since 2011, but it wasn’t until three years later that it became really bad. She had shooting and pulsating pains down her left leg which made it difficult to stand up straight and even coughing and sneezing were causing her a great deal of pain.

Visits to an osteopath and a chiropractor provided no relief, and even the medication that her GP prescribed didn’t help with the pain. Following an MRI scan which showed a prolapsed disc, Hannah was referred to a neurosurgeon. The neurosurgeon confirmed the prolapse and explained that this was compressing the nerve root which was why it was causing her so much pain. He felt that surgery would be the only way that Hannah would get relief from her symptoms.

Hannah went ahead with surgery, but unfortunately her pain did not improve. During the check-ups that followed it was established that the surgery had not been a success and Hannah was only able to achieve mild pain relief through painkillers.

A couple of months later Hannah suffered a relapse, and although further surgery was discussed, neither her nor her specialist felt she would receive any benefit. She continued taking pain relief and was referred to a pain clinic through which she tried a number of different therapies such as Pilates, swimming, massage and acupuncture in order to help manage her symptoms. Slowly but surely her pain started to improve. She was feeling more confident and was able to start a phased return to work.

Unfortunately six months later she suffered a further relapse and her painkillers were increased again. Extremely frustrated she contacted Best Doctors in search of a second medical opinion, a benefit made available to her as a member of the Police Federation via George Burrows. By this stage she was in constant pain which was stopping her from sleeping properly, and she was concerned about the amount of painkillers that she was taking.

She wanted to go back to her job as a police officer, but above all she wanted to be able to help out properly at home and eventually start playing sports again.

Having discussed her case with the Best Doctors medical team they collected all of her medical records and test results and contacted an expert in her condition who was able to review her case. The Best Doctors expert confirmed the diagnosis that Hannah had been given by her treating doctors and explained that it was likely that she had nerve irritation caused by damage to the discs between the vertebrae. He therefore suggested that she undergo nerve root blocks which involve the injection of anesthesia into individual nerves to identify the exact source of the pain. Depending on the findings of this procedure the ideal treatment could then be identified.

“ I was getting really frustrated about the way my condition was advancing and the lack of improvement that I was experiencing. Very quickly, Best Doctors were able to provide me with a detailed report with multiple ways in which I could combat my condition. ”

The expert also provided advice on alternative treatments, however he advised against further surgery, explaining that this should only be an option if all other treatment options had been tried and failed.

He recommended a multi-disciplinary approach combining epidural injections, physiotherapy and spinal stabilization alongside other medications and recommended that she is followed up by a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Musculoskeletal specialist who would have the relevant training and experience in her condition.

Hannah reviewed the report with her local doctor who suggested trying tramadol and steroid injections, reflecting the opinion of the Best Doctors expert. Hannah was very reassured that her doctor had agreed with the expert report and is feeling positive about embarking on further treatment.