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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Back or Hip Can Cause Leg Pain

Last week I had an elderly male patient enter my office complaining of “sciatica” (leg pain that refers from the low back). He simply assumed that the pain in his groin and front of his thigh was originating from his back because he had experienced symptoms similar to this before and ended up having low back surgery to correct it. Although the leg pain he was describing could have been originating from his low back, a detailed examination of that area revealed nothing significant. Knowing well that hip problems can cause similar pain patterns, I examined that joint next. By asking a few simple questions and moving the joint around in different directions, it was very obvious that there was a problem. By turning the leg inward and outward, the leg and groin pain could be reproduced or intensified. It was then obvious that the past treatments he was given should have been directed to the hip joint and not the low back.

Once this gentleman’s hip was x-rayed, my suspicion of osteoarthritis (“wear and tear” arthritis) was confirmed. I then explained to him that just because he had arthritis does not mean he should “baby” the joint. In fact, an arthritic joint will not last longer and the arthritis will not slow down if the joint does not get used. Because of the leg pain, he had not been getting hardly any exercise. This would have made the problem even worse. Any joint, arthritic or not, must get as much movement as possible to prevent further stiffness and pain. So, I started him on a light stretching and strengthening program for the muscles in and around the hip joint. He also received some chiropractic treatment of the muscles and the actual joint. This gentleman could also have benefited from losing a few pounds. For every pound extra he carried, it is three pounds more stress on his hip joint when walking. Jokingly, we decided that he should not consider taking up sprinting but instead should start a pool exercise program. This allowed him to use the muscles and move the joint without putting too much pressure on the arthritic joint. Within two weeks, his ability to walk was significantly improved and the intensity of the leg pain was much less.

If you are experiencing leg, thigh, groin, or knee pain, consider having the hip joint examined by your chiropractor or other health care practitioner. If you have any further questions, please contact me at my office directly.