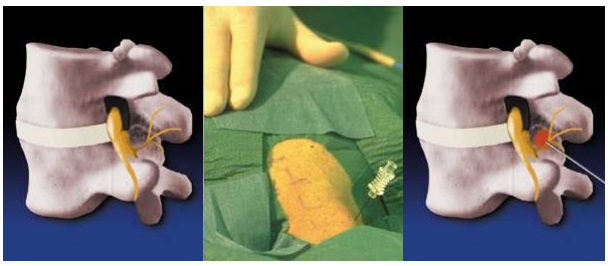
Thermocoagulation
Heat Probe Treatment of Vertebral Joints

Selective Percutaneous Thermocoagulation of the Vertebral and Sacroiliac Joints

Following local anesthesia the physician, guided by x-ray, maneuvers a cannula to the specific nerves responsible for pain. Once the proper position is achieved, a heat probe is inserted. Using a computer the physician can determine if the probe has indeed reached the affected nerve. Another injection of local anesthetics follows, this time however at the specific nerve to be treated. The probe is then heated and a small area is obliterated. The result is disruption of nerve conduction. Pain can no longer, in effect, be transmitted. Since each vertebral joint receives innervation from many nerves, more than one nerve must often be treated.



Indications

- therapy-resistant facet joint pain (vertebral joint pain), segmental pain
- vertebral joint arthrosis
- spinal column anomalies
- spondylolisthesis
- instability following disk or spinal column surgery

Value
Percutaneous thermocoagulation is precise treatment of specific nerves, a big advantage over broad-action pharmacological therapy. In comparison with cryotherapy (freezing of nerves), percutaneous thermocoagulation is longer lasting: the effects last for years, whereas cryotherapy lasts only a few months.

Advantage
This is a minimal invasive procedure, available on an out-patient basis. Most surgical procedures can be avoided using this procedure, despite progressive degenerative change of the spine. Medications can be reduced. A program of physical therapy may begin shortly after treatment. Work and physical activity are usually possible immediately following treatment.

Follow-Up
A program of physical therapy stressing isometric strength training and correct movement can be started directly following treatment. This can also be combined with electrical therapy, mineral baths, heat applications and massage.

Work
The procedure does not greatly impede physical function. Light physical activity such as office work is possible immediately following treatment.

Sport
Sports can be resumed relatively soon after treatment.

Results
Success rates of over 80% are reported in the national and international literature.

Thermocoagulation
Heat Probe Treatment of the Dorsal Root Ganglion

Selective Percutaneous Thermocoagulation of the Dorsal Root Ganglion

Thermocoagulation is precise treatment of affected dorsal root ganglions under local anesthesia. After inserting the heat probe the physician verifies via computer whether the probe is positioned exactly at the ganglion. Local anesthesia is again injected, this time at the ganglion. The probe is then heated and the ganglion is cauterized.

Indications

- therapy-resistant radiating pain (for example arm or leg pain)
- failure of at least three periradicular therapies (treatment near the nerve roots)
- progressive vertebral joint arthrosis
- spinal stenosis (narrowing of the spinal canal)
- foramen stenosis (narrowing of the intervertebral foramen)

Value
Percutaneous thermocoagulation is precise treatment of specific nerves, a big advantage over broad-action pharmacological therapy. The effects of percutaneous thermocoagulation last for years in comparison to those of cryotherapy (freezing of nerves), which only last a few months.

Advantage
This is a minimal invasive procedure, available on an out-patient basis. Surgical procedures such as foraminotomy (widening of the intervertebral foramen) or hemilaminectomy (partial removal of vertebral lamina) can be avoided using this procedure. Movement can be regained shortly after treatment. Medical follow-up can also begin shortly thereafter.

Follow-Up
A program of physical therapy stressing isometric strength training and correct movement can begin directly following treatment. This can be also be combined with electrical therapy, bath therapy, heat applications and massage.

Work
The procedure does not greatly impede physical function. Light physical activity such as office work is possible immediately after treatment.

Sport
Sports can be resumed relatively soon after treatment.

Results
Success rates of over 80% are reported in the national and international literature.