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NEWSLETTER #124 February 2024

WASHINGTON STATE DECISION ON SCS IMMINENT

This week we await [announcement of a decision](#) by the State of Washington on coverage of spinal cord stimulation (SCS) for state employees, people inscribed in state-sponsored health plans, and injured workers. Over the past year, the Washington State Physicians Spinal Cord Stimulation (SCS) Work Group has considered evidence presented by its members, as described in [a recent podcast](#) from the American Academy of Pain Medicine hosted by Dr. Shravani Durbhakula et al.

This takes us back more than 15 years, when Dr. North made a pilgrimage to the State of Washington to give a presentation in May 2008 to the Department of Labor & Industries, which at the time was not favorably inclined toward SCS for workers' compensation patients. At issue was a report by Turner, Comstock, Hollingworth, and Deyo, who had conducted a study of SCS for failed back surgery syndrome that was published two years later ([Turner et al., 2010](#); see also [Hollingworth et al., 2011](#)).

During the 2008 meeting, Dr. North presented a detailed critique of the study methodology and interpretation, but only a small audience in a government office saw and heard it. At that time, we didn't have virtual meetings; thus, we could not easily reach large audiences or present details or extensive volumes of data as well as we can now. As noted, we had to wait two years for publication of the study; additional months passed before the journal published our Letter to the Editor ([North et al., 2010](#)), which of course was limited in length. The authors responded, but then, as now, the journal did not allow us to follow up (as the authors presumably knew), and some of our important criticisms were dismissed, sidestepped, or ignored with no potential for us to respond.

In 2024, notwithstanding all of the advances in technology, we are still faced with many of the same constraints on journal communications and Letters to the Editor, along with ongoing methodological, ethical, and other concerns about study design, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses. Since 2013, however, Wikistim.org has provided an online discussion forum and bibliographic service to the neuromodulation community to

facilitate rapid and ongoing communication. Our [discussion forum](#) is not constrained by a time limit, which means a dialogue on publications such as the Turner papers and the issues they raise can continue as long as necessary or even resume years later.

Important decisions should be based on the best available evidence and on a full and balanced discussion. WIKISTIM exists to support this.

- [History in the making: the battle for SCS coverage in Washington State](#). Pain Matters, Podcast Episode 28 AAPM, Durbhakula S, Broachwala M (hosts) accessed February 15, 2024
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We only list correction citations if the error was substantial. For small changes, such as a missing initial in an author's name, we simply update the WIKISTIM database.

Deep Brain Stimulation (now 8098 citations)

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Dorsal Root Ganglion Stimulation (now 265 citations)

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Gastric Electrical Stimulation (still 524 citations)

Peripheral Nerve Stimulation (now 761 citations)

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Spinal Cord Stimulation (now 3262 citations)

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