Spinal corticosteroid injections do not increase the risk for influenza

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| Challenge | **Corticosteroids are known to suppress immune response and there are concerns that it may place patients at risk for influenza and may reduce the effectiveness of the influenza vaccine.**  |
| Existing Evidence | There are no prior studies examining the risk of influenza following spinal corticosteroid injections. A single published study by Sytsma et al demonstrated an increased risk for influenza in patients following a major joint corticosteroid injection.  |
| Target Population | All adults receiving a spinal corticosteroid injection during the 2016-19 influenza seasons. |
| Intervention or Exposure | Received a spinal corticosteroid injection during the observation windows. |
| **Outcomes/Key Findings** | **Spinal CSI did not increase the odds of subsequently receiving a diagnosis of influenza, regardless of vaccination status, route of injection, single versus multiple same-day injection, or co-morbidity. Vaccination had a protective effect against influenza, and this was not adversely affected by receiving a spinal corticosteroid injection during the flu season.**  |
| **Resulting Action/Change** | **Physicians may more effectively counsel their patients on the safety and risks of receiving a spinal corticosteroid injection during influenza season.** Based on this study, clinicians treating patients in moderate to severe pain requiring a spinal injection may continue to offer these valuable pain-relieving procedures without needing to time the injection based on the start/stop of the influenza season, or time the injection based on vaccine administration. |
| Additional Recommendations | NA |
| Implementation Tools  | Material will be shared with stakeholders, including PM&R, Pain Management, Spine Surgery, and Adult and Family Medicine. This will occur via powerpoint or other written summary material. Dissemination will be facilitated by the Chiefs of PM&R and Pain Management |
| Implementation Measurement | NA |
| Reference | Pending  |