

# THE EFFECTS OF THE SPINEX EXERCISE PROGRAM IN PERSONS WITH BENIGN SPINAL PAIN

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## **Abstract (Limited to 300 Words):**

**Purpose:** To evaluate the effectiveness of a spinal rehabilitation program in reducing pain and improving function coordinated between spinal rehabilitation physicians and physical therapists in a structured, exercise based, group rehabilitation program.

**Study Design:** Retrospective case series.

**Subjects:** Chart reviews of 240 patients were evaluated that met the inclusion/exclusion criteria

**Outcome Measures** --Oswestry Disability Index, VAS, lifting tasks, lumbar extension strength, spinal and lower extremity mobility, and the 6 minute walk test

**Methods:** All participants consented to treatment that consisted of a total of 16 therapy sessions, and 3 visits to a physician over an 8-week interval in an outpatient gym setting specifically designed for the SpineX program consisting of nautilus, free weights, mats and cardiovascular exercise equipment.

**Results:** The average age of participants was 47 years (+/- 12.7). Average ODI at baseline was 24.4 with a drop to 17.6, with an overall ODI improvement of 6.73 (+/- 7.04) at the end of the 8 week program. Linear regression analysis revealed the only significant predictor for ODI improvement ( $p < .05$ ) was workman's compensation. There were significant and clinically meaningful improvements in flexibility, strength, VAS and functional lifting tasks ( $P < .001$ ) and extension strength ( $p = .003$ ). A six month follow-up questionnaire noted improvement in 81% of respondents, 35.7% reported decreased use of pain medications.

**Conclusion:** An 8 week intensive exercise program performed in a group setting twice per week under the direct treatment of a physician and rehabilitation group, with emphasis on reducing fear avoidance behavior and improving strength and flexibility can be successful in reducing spinal pain and improving function.

**Implications for practice:** Consideration may be given for group therapy multi-factorial exercise programs in patients with chronic low back pain.