

Britain's First Private Centre for Endoscopic Spine Surgery

An international team of spinal surgeons has opened Britain's first Private Centre for Endoscopic Spine Surgery at The Princess Grace Hospital in central London providing a unique service to patients with lumbar disc problems.

The London Endoscopic Spine Surgery - **LESS** for short - is the brainchild of distinguished surgeons, Mr Peter Hamlyn and his partner, Michael Schubert from Munich in Germany, who is one of the World's leading pioneers in endoscopic spinal surgery. Though the technique is new to Britain this team has experience of over 1500 cases.



Mr Peter Hamlyn



Mr Michael Schubert

Over 30,000 back surgery operations each year in the UK

Every year in the UK around two million people see their GP about **back pain** and more than 300,000 see a specialist with more than 30,000 patients eventually having surgery.

Until now spinal surgery has frequently meant a major operation with a large incision and complex open surgery requiring a general anaesthetic. Even those having keyhole "microdiscectomy" have needed weeks of convalescence after the surgery. But for many patients suffering from lower back or sciatic pain, there is now a new and lasting solution.

A new invasive technique

Most causes of back pain are degenerative conditions following the normal process of 'wear and tear' that occurs in life and sometimes through playing sports. The spine is incredibly complex with 24 bones, 23 discs, 46 major joints and 55 LESSer joints. Discs act as modified joints and all joints are supported by ligaments attached to the bones on either side of the joints. The main strength of the spine comes from its associated muscles. Running through it is the spinal cord and all its nerves - the brain's "motorway" to the body.

Michael Schubert, is one of the World's key figures in the development of this new minimally invasive technique of removing damaged disc tissue. Through a tiny incision - half a centimetre long - to the side of the spine and using specially designed instruments that allow direct access to the damaged area of the spine without having to divide muscle, disturb blood vessels or remove large amounts of bone. The instrument is passed through the natural hole in the side of the spinal canal and then into the spinal canal itself. The nerves can be seen clearly down the

endoscope and protected. Damaged pieces of disc are removed and this immediately releases the pressure on the nerve and so the pain.

The operation does not even require a general anaesthetic. It is carried out with the patient sedated but awake and lying on his or her side. It takes around an hour and a half and after an overnight stay in hospital the patient can go home and be back at work within days. The group's experience is that sciatic pain often goes immediately though for some it takes a few weeks for things to settle.

Over 90% success

Success rates for this new form of keyhole surgery are around 93% and even when carried out on patients who have already had open surgery fail the success rate for endoscopic procedures is more than 85%.

Key Benefits

Why have more? When you can have **L.E.S.S.**

- **LESS Scarring**
- **LESS Anaesthetic**
- **LESS Hours in hospital**
- **LESS Pain**
- **LESS Drugs**
- **LESS Time off work**
- **LESS Time off sport**



First time in the UK

They carried out the first endoscopic discectomy procedure in the UK at The Princess Grace Hospital, four months ago and their patients have already included a Premier League player, patients whose problems have returned following conventional keyhole surgery and patients of a wide range of ages from the young to the elderly. Patients have been leaving hospital the next day without feeling pain.

"This new operation is a revolutionary development in spinal surgery which requires an opening no wider than a pencil and leaves the muscles and bones virtually untouched. You exchange the conventional, complex, lengthy and open operation - with the need to spend a prolonged time in hospital - for an endoscopic procedure which gives instant pain relief and discharge the next day. I have been performing keyhole microsurgery on slipped discs for 20 years and this is a huge leap forward.

The tissue disruption is so small that patients have been going home the next morning already off pain killers - it's quite remarkable," said Mr Hamlyn.

LONDON ENDOSCOPIC SPINE SURGERY

If you would like to learn more about this procedure or talk to a member of the team please call
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www.londonendoscopicspinesurgery.com