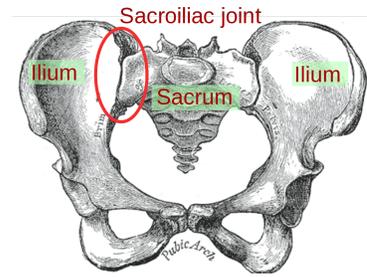


Episode #5 SI joint show notes

The SI joint is the best example that we have of why the algorithm for low back pain treatment doesn't work. The SI joint is most commonly hurt because of weakness from somewhere else. The way we walk leads to SI joint irritation. Not every time, but most of the time. Causes of SI joint pain by itself include stepping in a hole, being yanked by something you are holding, one leg longer than the other, hitting your knee on the dashboard in a car accident, one leg longer than the other or previously having a lumbar fusion. In each of these cases, the SI joint can be the sole cause of your pain, and while these sound pretty common, it is not close to the most common cause. When someone's facet joints get irritated it changes the way their pelvis moves when they walk. Normally the pelvis rocks with walking as the whole pelvis moves as one with the pelvis staying level or slightly rising on the side of leg swing. When the facet joints hurt, one will rock away from the tender facet and the pelvis stops moving as one and stress is conveyed across the SI joint. This leads to pain. The pain, because it overlaps with facet pain, becomes a difficult diagnosis. Many parts of diagnosis have to be used together as no one diagnostic tool can predict whether the SI joint is a cause of pain. We use history, detailed physical exam, pain story, pain during injection and results from injection all as parts to create a whole. The essential parts of the pain story include: pain if sitting too long, pain if standing too long, pain if walking too long, pain if laying down too long, crossing the leg to tie shoes sometimes hurts and sometimes feels better, pain holding something heavy in one arm and patient finds themselves standing on one leg and then the other. Non-essential parts of the pain story include: pain down to the back of the leg to the knee, patient reports that if they roll over in bed, they almost have to sit up to keep from hurting and patients will often get piriformis muscle spasm. We discuss treatment of the SI joint and why treating this joint alone is a problem. We discuss research around the treatment of the SI joint and the flaws of this research. We discuss how SI joint radio frequency ablation creates a result that can be misinterpreted and the articles that United Healthcare uses to deny SI joint treatment. We also discuss research in general and Bad Science book by Gary Taubes and how pain management is going down a path of pathological science instead a path of discovery.



Pelvis image from recoveryourstride.blogspot.com

Intro: Sacroiliac joint pain may be a huge linchpin in future treatment of the lower back. Because if we can make the case for SI joint pain and how it is caused by other pain, then we can begin to destroy the low back pain algorithm that has led to so many problems in the treatment of back pain. This episode gets a little crazy as Dr. Wheeler pours his passion into defining this problem and his solution. Strap in... and enjoy!