

## **404 - Non-Surgical Spinal Disc Decompression**

With Steven Bruce and Rob Shanks

### **Overview of IDD Therapy**

- IDD therapy, or Intervertebral Differential Dynamics, is a non-surgical spinal decompression method used primarily for discogenic pathologies such as herniated discs, sciatica, and facet joint-related pain.
- The therapy involves using controlled forces and oscillatory movements to reduce intradiscal pressure, improve disc hydration, and alleviate nerve compression symptoms.
- Distinction was made between IDD therapy and traditional traction, emphasising IDD's advanced technology, precision targeting, and oscillatory features.

### **Patient Selection and Assessment**

- Effective patient selection was highlighted as a critical factor for successful outcomes.
- Ideal candidates:
  - Patients with unresolved disc-related symptoms persisting beyond 6–8 weeks.
  - Cases with compatible clinical symptoms and MRI findings, particularly involving wet disc protrusions.
- Contraindications:
  - Osteoporosis with a T-score below -2.5.
  - Sequestered disc fragments, as these cannot be decompressed.
  - Recent spinal surgeries involving hardware
  - Severe scoliosis beyond a 45-degree Cobb angle.
- Clinical assessments include a comprehensive history, neurological examinations (e.g., straight leg raise, reflex testing), and MRI analysis.

### **Therapy Protocol and Mechanisms**

- Sessions involve a gradual increase in pulling force over 26 minutes, oscillatory pumping to enhance disc health, and controlled regression to minimise strain.
- Treatment frequency is typically two to five sessions per week, with a full course ranging from 20–30 sessions based on individual severity.
- Patients often begin to see improvement by session 12–15, although outcomes vary significantly.
- Safety mechanisms include adjustable harnesses, bolsters, and emergency stop buttons to ensure patient comfort and security.

### **Key Clinical Considerations**

- Professionalism in communication and honesty in setting realistic expectations were emphasised:
  - Avoiding IDD therapy as a “cash cow” and only recommending it for patients who stand to benefit.
  - Discussing the therapy’s cost-effectiveness compared to surgical alternatives.
- Maintenance therapy post-completion can prevent relapses, with recommended intervals starting at once per month.

### **Comparisons with Alternative Treatments**

- IDD therapy vs. manual therapy:
  - Manual therapies can address acute symptoms but may fail in chronic or severe cases.
- IDD therapy vs. surgical options:
  - Highlighted as a non-invasive option with no point-of-no-return, preserving future surgical possibilities if necessary.
- IDD therapy vs. older traction methods:
  - IDD therapy was described as a significant advancement, with better patient outcomes due to its precision and sustained application.

### **Relevance to Communication, Consent, and Candour**

- The discussion underscored the importance of clear communication and obtaining informed consent by:
  - Explaining therapy protocols, expected outcomes, and risks.

- Using MRI findings to align patient expectations with realistic outcomes.
- Professional candour was discussed concerning the need to be honest about therapy limitations and to promptly address potential adverse effects.

### **Research and Evidence**

- Although promising, the evidence base for IDD therapy was noted as limited.
- Plans for a clinical trial to strengthen the research base were mentioned, recognising the importance of robust data for broader acceptance.

### **Practical Demonstration**

- The discussion included practical elements such as:
  - Demonstrating patient setup on the IDD table.
  - Explaining how treatment angles are adjusted to target specific spinal segments.
  - Addressing patient comfort, including padding adjustments and safety measures.

### **Ethical and Financial Considerations**

- Transparency in pricing and ethical practice was a recurring theme:
  - Discussions about ensuring therapy is offered appropriately and not overly commercialised.
  - Acknowledgement of challenges in marketing and maintaining the cost-efficiency of running an IDD machine in practice.