

## **MEDIA ALERT**

### **For Immediate Release**

Contact:  
Andrea Becicka  
Spine Team Texas  
817-749-2141

[Spine Team Texas Surgeons Initiate a new clinical study to evaluate a novel cervical artificial disc replacement design](#)

### **Landmark Procedure Replaces Damaged Cervical Disc with Artificial Implant**

Dallas, Texas – December 1, 2005 – For many people, the phrase “pain in the neck” is nothing to laugh about. A damaged cervical disc in the neck can be debilitating, causing neck, shoulder and arm numbness, tingling, muscle weakness and radiating pain that leads to untold suffering and lost work days.

Now a new medical treatment under clinical investigation, a cervical artificial disc replacement, may offer people with cervical disc disease or injury new hope. During this new procedure, the patient’s damaged natural disc is replaced with an artificial implant.

On Monday, November 21, David Rothbart, M.D., a neurosurgeon and medical director at Spine Team Texas, performed the first cervical artificial disc replacement for this randomized clinical trial in the country at Harris Methodist Southlake Center for Diagnostics and Surgery in Southlake, Texas. Juan Bartolomei, M.D., also a neurosurgeon with Spine Team Texas, assisted in the case.

The procedure is part of a national clinical investigational trial by a leading orthopedic medical company and manufacturer of the cervical artificial disc.

The manufacturer of the cervical artificial disc has partnered with the nation’s leading back and neck surgeons **at 25 centers around the country** to evaluate whether the cervical artificial disc will alleviate pain and symptoms, restore mobility and improve function for patients with degenerative disc disease or traumatic injury to the cervical area of the spine.

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## Pg. 2 Landmark Cervical Artificial Disc Replacement Surgery

Traditional treatment for a damaged cervical disc always begins with a conservative regimen of medication and nonsurgical treatment such as physical therapy and injection therapy. But when conservative methods fail to address the problem and the patient's quality of life becomes increasingly difficult, the standard course of action has been to offer surgical spinal fusion.

During a spinal fusion, the vertebrae are fused together, which gives the patient more stability, but causes stiffness and decreased mobility. Although this can be a successful treatment for a pinched nerve in the neck, spinal fusions have the potential risk of transferring or increasing stress on other areas of the spine.

In contrast, the new cervical artificial disc has been designed to enable as closely as possible the normal movement of the natural cervical joint in the spine. It is hoped that it will restore full disc height, which usually has been compressed from the disease or injury.

Spine Team Texas is one of 25 centers in the country participating in the cervical artificial disc replacement study. The study is a prospective, randomized clinical trial of approximately 400 patients who will be randomly selected to receive either the artificial cervical disc replacement or spinal fusion. To qualify as a participant, patients must be between 18 and 65 years of age and meet strict criteria.

Although no cervical disc replacement has been yet approved by the Food & Drug Administration, the advent of artificial disc replacement surgery has often been compared with hip and knee replacement surgery, which is now the standard treatment for many damaged hip or knee joints. Before hip and knee replacement surgery became commonplace, the damaged joint was fused, a process that reduced pain and provided stability, but made movement difficult.

For more information about the research programs at Spine Team Texas, please call Andrea Becicka at Spine Team Texas, 817-749-2141.

### About Dr. Rothbart and Spine Team Texas

A board-certified and fellowship-trained neurosurgeon, David Rothbart, M.D., is the founder of Spine Team Texas, North Texas' Premier Regional Spine Center offering diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of neck and back pain. Spine Team Texas uses an integrated team approach and offers long-term solutions for patients' recovery and rehabilitation.

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Dr. Rothbart is a Yale University-trained, experienced neurosurgeon specializing in minimally invasive surgery of the spine. He was the chief resident in neurosurgery and a clinical instructor at Yale-New Haven Medical Center, a teaching hospital of the Yale University School of Medicine. After completing a fellowship at the prestigious Barrow Neurological Institute in Arizona, Dr. Rothbart was in private practice in Chicago where he was Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery at Rush Medical College. He came to the Dallas Metroplex in 2002.

Juan Carlos Bartolomei, M.D., assisted Dr. Rothbart in performing the first surgery in this cervical artificial disc replacement clinical trial on Monday, November 21. A cum laude graduate of the Yale University School of Medicine, Dr. Bartolomei was also chief resident and a clinical instructor in the department of Neurosurgery at Yale-New Haven Hospital. After a fellowship at the Barrow Neurological Institute, he joined the Yale University School of Medicine faculty as an assistant professor in the department of Neurosurgery. Dr. Bartolomei has received many grants, fellowships and awards, including the Yale University School of Medicine Department of Surgery Honors, a National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders Fellowship and the Sandox Recognition of Superior Academic Achievement and Contribution to Health Care Award.

#### About Harris Methodist Southlake Center for Diagnostics and Surgery

Harris Methodist Southlake Center for Diagnostics and Surgery is a multi-specialty surgical hospital located at 1545 East Southlake Blvd. in Southlake, Texas. Harris Methodist Southlake serves the communities of Northeast Tarrant and Denton Counties. A 37,800 square foot facility with 6 overnight suites, 4 operating rooms, 1 pain management suite, comprehensive diagnostic imaging services, and a medical office building with physical therapy, breast diagnostic center, and a pharmacy. Surgical services provided include: ENT, general surgery, gynecology, neurosurgery, oral surgery, orthopedics, pain management, plastics, and podiatry. The main phone number for Harris Methodist Southlake is: (817) 748-8700.

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