

Scoliosis Topic of Hospital Program

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DANBURY - While the main cause of Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis is undetermined, doctors now know females between 11 and 14 years of age stand a much higher risk of spinal curvature. David Bomback, M.D., Department of Surgery, section of orthopedics at the Center for Advanced Orthopedic Care at Danbury Hospital, and practicing physician of Connecticut Neck and Back Specialists in Danbury, spoke of the importance school nurses have in spotting signs of AIS during a meeting entitled Detecting and Treating Scoliosis.

"One of the most important factors in diagnosing scoliosis is the patient history," said Dr. Bomback. "We need to know if they have any pain, sensitivity around the curvature, or headaches along with their general health, skeletal maturity and previous treatments they may have received."

The Adam's Forward Bend Test is the most common way to check for scoliosis. A patient touches their toes while standing, allowing the school nurse or physician to carefully examine the spine.

Tell-tale signs of scoliosis manifest as a noticeable curvature(s) of the spine, asymmetric scapulas or shoulders and the occasional variations in leg length.

Although some curvature of the spine is normal, lateral curves reaching above 10 to 15 degrees should be examined by a doctor.

Serious forms of AIS are located in the thoracic region of the spine, where given enough torque, the spine can manipulate the ribs and potentially cause rib humps or skin abnormalities.

Significant spinal curvatures nearing 100 degrees have the possibility to inhibit pulmonary function and lead to cardiac difficulty.

Should an adolescent need surgery to correct a spinal curvature, Dr. Bomback suggests a 36-inch X-ray taken from a posterior view showing the entire spine and pelvis. When taken from behind, the patient is exposed to significantly less breast radiation.

In many circumstances, a post-operative patient will still have a small curve because significant spinal realignment may actually fracture the spinal column or damage the spinal cord.

Other speakers included Dee Cupole, a registered nurse with the Newtowns for 25 years, who shared examination experience with other nurses.

Orthotic and prosthetic gurus Sara Colwick and Bob Foster spoke about various braces, especially "the gold star" of scoliosis, the Boston Brace.

Those seeking additional information may call 203-739-7247 or visit www.danburyhospital.org.

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