

## Spinal problems – Spine surgeon or neurosurgeon: Is it an issue?

As a spine surgeon, I normally encounter patients with pain involving the vertebral column and spinal canal that, of course, involves the cervical spine. However, if any pathology, like compressive myelopathy, or pathology involving the nerves, was encountered, patients ask, “Sir, which neurosurgeon should I show to?”

Neurosurgeons are the specialists who treat pathologies affecting the entire nervous system. On the other hand, we spine surgeons work on backs and necks 24 × 7. Both the surgeons are trained and qualified to treat problems related to the vertebral column including the spinal canal and peripheral nerves. However, there is a minor difference between the two specialties. Neurosurgeons treat conditions of the spine and brain, while a spine surgeon trains in treating the spine only. Still, majority of the people think that spine surgeons are unable to treat disorders related to nerves. This is a common misconception that majority of the orthopedic spine surgeons encounter on a daily basis. There is a notion that neurosurgeons deal with nerves, whereas orthopedic spine surgeons deal exclusively with bones. In fact, regardless of who is performing the procedure, it is needless to say that both the surgeons are concerned about the nerves of the affected patient. The risks while performing spine surgery are significant and a surgery of this importance can be victorious only by the utmost concern of the surgeon about nerves.

Both the specialties operate on complicated patients, and over the years, the line between the two specialties has gradually become blurred. The two similar specialists are capable of providing excellent care to such patients. Hence, awareness regarding the co-existence of neurosurgeons and orthopedic spine surgeons for performing spine surgery needs to be inculcated among patients. This comes under an upcoming branch of

“Spine Surgery” that accommodates both the specialties in their own glory.

To conclude I would like to say – *Be so good, they can't ignore you or categorize you....*

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