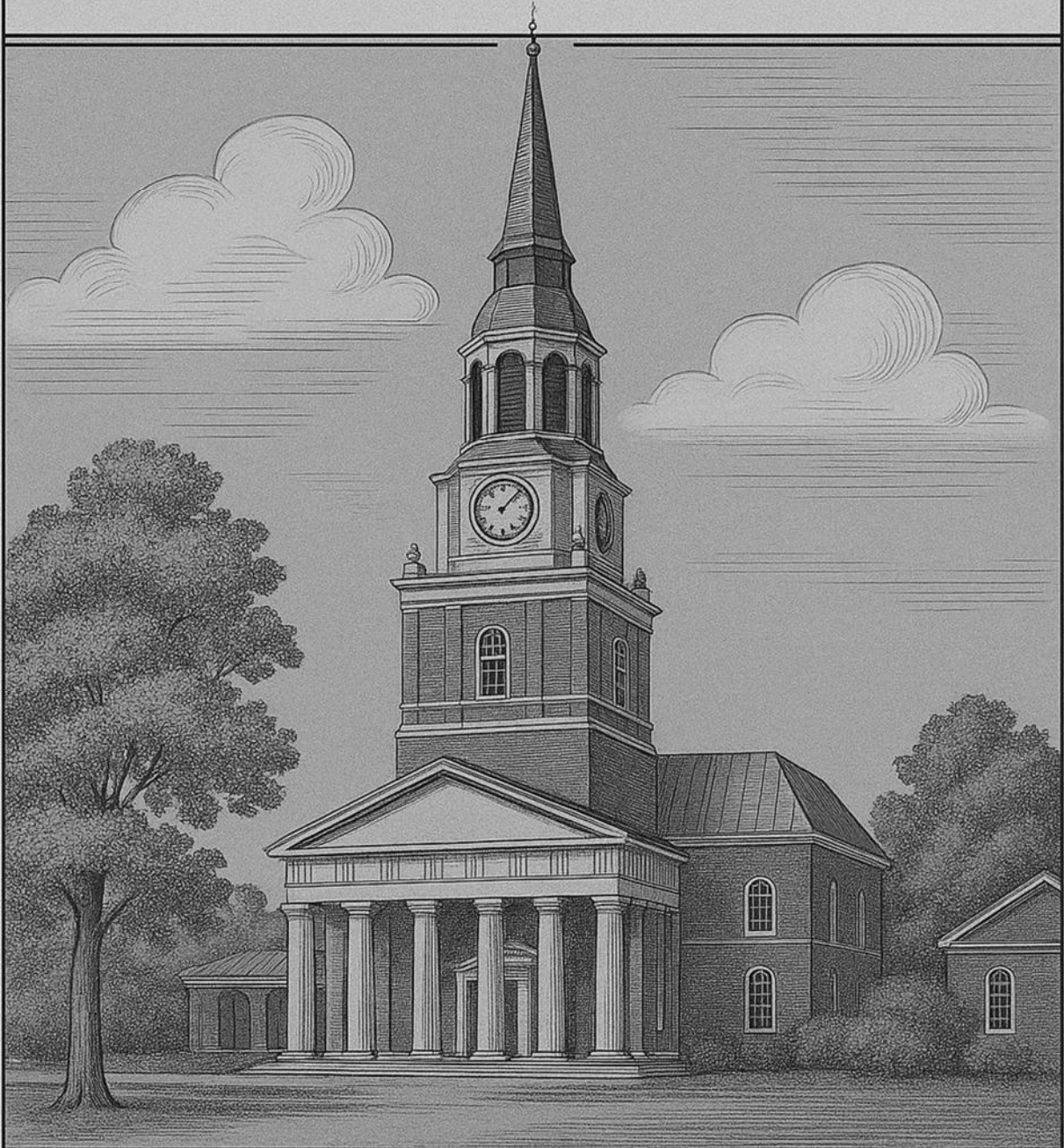


WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY



Interventional Pain Medicine

Pain Report May 2025

Articles of Interest:

1. “Assessment of real-world, prospective outcomes in patients treated with lumbar radiofrequency ablation for chronic pain (RAPID).” Interventional Pain Medicine (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.inpm.2025.100576>)

The RAPID study is a prospective, multicenter, international observational study evaluating the outcomes of lumbar radiofrequency ablation (RFA) in patients with chronic pain. Preliminary results from 295 enrolled patients indicate significant improvements in pain scores, with a 3.6-point reduction on the targeted pain scale at 24 months post-procedure. Additionally, 81.4% of patients reported at least 50% pain relief, and 91% expressed satisfaction with the treatment. These findings suggest that lumbar RFA is an effective and well-tolerated option for managing chronic pain, with sustained benefits over time.

2. “Association between modifiable and nonmodifiable risk factors with paralumbar muscle health in patients with lower back pain.” NASSJ (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.xnsj.2024.100570>)

This retrospective cohort study assessed the impact of modifiable and nonmodifiable risk factors on paralumbar muscle health in patients with lower back pain. The analysis revealed that increasing age, higher BMI, presence of spondylolisthesis, and limited walking tolerance were significantly associated with poorer muscle health, as indicated by increased Goutallier classification and lumbar indentation value, and decreased cross-sectional area normalized by BMI. Notably, obesity was linked to increased muscle cross-sectional area at certain lumbar levels, but also to increased fat infiltration and decreased muscle quality. The findings underscore the importance of addressing modifiable risk factors and suggest that interventions targeting muscle health may benefit patients with lower back pain.

3. “Cooled radiofrequency ablation provides extended clinical utility in the management of chronic sacroiliac joint pain: 12-month follow-up results from the observational phase of a randomized, multicenter, comparative-effectiveness crossover study.” Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine (<https://doi.org/10.1136/rapm-2024-106315>)

In a randomized, multicenter, comparative-effectiveness crossover study, cooled radiofrequency ablation (CRFA) demonstrated sustained clinical benefits for chronic sacroiliac joint (SIJ) pain over a 12-month period. At 12 months, the mean Numeric Rating Scale (NRS) pain score decreased from 6.4 to 3.5 in the CRFA group, with 57.4% of participants achieving a ≥ 2 -point or 30% reduction in pain. The crossover group also showed significant improvements, with mean NRS pain scores decreasing from 6.1 to 3.4. Additionally, both groups reported clinically meaningful enhancements in quality of life and functional status, with no serious adverse events related to the procedure.

Match Day Milestones

Congratulations to **Timothy Yin** and **Christian Sangio**, 4th-year medical students at Wake Forest University School of Medicine, on their incredible achievements in the Match! Timothy has matched at **Georgetown University**, and Christian will be joining **Mayo Clinic Rochester**, both in the field of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Both have been mentored by Dr. Enrique Galang, whose guidance has helped shape their journey. We are incredibly proud of their hard work and excited to see all that they will accomplish in the next chapter of their medical careers!



Beyond the Fellowship: Dr. Corey Reeves Brings Precision from the Racetrack to the Clinic



Before **Dr. Corey Reeves** became a physician, he was already familiar with the weight of a helmet, the hum of tuned engines, and the silence before a national title race. An **11-time U.S. national kart racing champion**, Reeves grew up navigating high-speed corners with the precision and focus that would later define his medical career. Featured in Sports Illustrated at just 19, he was, by all accounts, a rising star on the track.

Today, he brings that same intensity to the world of pain medicine. A graduate of the **Wake Forest University School of Medicine**

Interventional Pain Medicine Fellowship, Dr. Reeves is a founding partner of **Excel Pain and Spine**—the largest multidisciplinary pain management practice in the Tampa Bay area. There, he's helping to redefine what modern pain care looks like: collaborative, innovative, and grounded in compassion.

We spoke with Dr. Reeves about his path from champion racer to physician, and how his past continues to shape his present.

What motivates you most in your clinical practice, and how has your training shaped your approach to pain management?

“I’m driven by the ability to make meaningful improvements in my patients’ daily lives. My training at Wake Forest laid the foundation for combining technical skill with patient-centered decision-making, and that still guides everything I do.”



What guidance would you offer to current or graduating pain fellows as they prepare to enter the next phase of their careers?

“Surround yourself with people who align with your values. The right team and a clear sense of purpose can take you far—whether it’s in business or patient care. And always keep growing; medicine doesn’t stand still, and neither should you.”

You have a strong interest in neuromodulation—what draws you to this area of pain medicine, and how do you see its role evolving in the future?

“Neuromodulation reminds me of racing. Both require precision, real-time adjustments, and a deep understanding of the system you’re working with. Just like a car needs to be fine-tuned for performance, neuromodulation lets us tailor therapy to the individual—offering possibilities we couldn’t have imagined a decade ago.”

Pain Outcomes Lab Website Now Live



We are excited to announce that the **Pain Outcomes Lab** website is now live! Led by **Robert Hurley, MD, PhD, FASA, Executive Director of the Pain Service Line and Director of the Pain Outcomes Lab**, the site provides valuable insights into ongoing research and projects aimed at improving pain management. Visit Pain Outcomes Lab (<https://school.wakehealth.edu/research/labs/pain-outcomes-lab>) to learn more about the lab’s innovative work in the field of pain medicine and how it’s shaping the future of patient care within the Pain Service Line. We look forward to sharing more updates as the lab continues to make impactful strides in pain research!

Board Review Blitz

A 45-year-old female presents with moderate to severe acute pain following a bunionectomy. She has no significant past medical history and is not currently taking any medications. You decide to prescribe JOURNAVX (suzetrigine).

Question:

Which of the following statements about JOURNAVX (suzetrigine) is correct?

- A) JOURNAVX should be taken with food to enhance absorption.
- B) The starting dose of JOURNAVX is 100 mg orally, followed by 50 mg every 12 hours.
- C) JOURNAVX is a non-selective sodium channel blocker.
- D) JOURNAVX has been studied for long-term use beyond 14 days.

Clinical Firsts!



Drs. Janus Patel, Enrique Galang, and Christopher Trower (Interventional Pain Fellow) are proud to be the **FIRST** interventional pain physicians in North Carolina to utilize Abbott's Next Generation Delivery System for Dorsal Root Ganglion (DRG) Neurostimulation!

Our team is thrilled to bring this cutting-edge neuromodulation technology to patients living with chronic pain — advancing care and improving lives across the state. Well done!



Save the Dates

50th Annual Regional Anesthesiology and Acute Pain Medicine Meeting: May 1-3, 2025 | Orlando, Florida

The American Society of Pain and Neuroscience (ASPN) Annual Conference: July 17-20, 2025 | Miami, Florida

North American Spine Society (NASS) International Annual Meeting: July 21-26, 2025 | Taipei, Taiwan

PAINWeek Annual Conference: September: 2-5, 2025 | Las Vegas Nevada

American Society of Anesthesiologists - ANESTHESIOLOGY 2025: October 10-14, 2025 | San Antonio, Texas

American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation – AAPMR25: October 22-25, 2025 | Salt Lake City, Utah