

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

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Occipital nerve stimulation for treatment of severe occipital headaches

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Treatment of chronic occipital headaches and occipital neuralgia remains challenging; few available options for medically intractable cases generally include occipital neurectomy, upper cervical ganglionectomy and various percutaneous destructive procedures on the occipital nerves or the upper cervical nerve roots. A nondestructive alternative of occipital pain treatment with long-term stimulation of the occipital nerve with implanted electrodes is gradually gaining popularity in medical and surgical circles.

We present our latest 12 months experience with occipital nerve stimulation. Out of large number of patients with occipital pain who were referred to us for surgical consideration, 8 were selected for the occipital nerve stimulation trial. Six of them had more than 50% improvement of pain intensity during the trial and underwent implantation of the permanent stimulation system. These patients were followed up for at least six months, and the results of the follow up are presented here.

In our opinion, long-term occipital nerve stimulation is a safe and effective modality that may be particularly useful for medically refractory cases of occipital neuralgia and disabling occipital headaches. This presentation summarizes our indications, screening protocol, and technical details of the occipital nerve stimulation procedure. Strict adherence to minute details allowed us to minimize complication risks.