

Pilot days remaining: **151**Patient referrals to date: **2,473**Average wait time: **12 days**Patients needing Imaging/Specialist: **186**

## Inter-professional Spine Assessment and Education Clinics (ISAEC) Pilot

### Patient Perspective: There and Back Again, The Story of an ISAEC Patient



Marcia Correale, PT  
APC – Toronto  
Questions?  
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**It started with a small twinge in my back** as I was riding my bicycle up a steep driveway.

I could tell that something had been tweaked, but it didn't stop me from making it to my meeting on time. I could still feel some pain two months later, and decided to visit my Family Health Team. My doctor felt that it was probably just a pulled muscle, and told me just to monitor it.

As instructed, I remained active. I played lots of sports and my condition didn't really hinder me too much. I would make a point of warming up and doing lots of stretches before and after. Knowing that I would feel some pain the next day, I'd take proactive measures like taking a hot bath, but this only helped in the short-term. My pain kept getting worse.

As the pain became intolerable, I looked for ways to manage my symptoms. I was referred for several cortisone injections. While these injections helped cool things down, they never really treated the root cause of my pain. Consequently, my pain came back worse than ever a few months later.

After more than a year and a half in chronic pain, I decided to give it one last shot. I completed a six-week program with my osteopath, and when it still wasn't improving we decided that surgery may be a viable option. By this time I had moved and changed doctors and I was lucky that my new Family Health Team doctor was trained in the ISAEC program. After a more thorough physical assessment than I'd received to date, my doctor agreed that I was a candidate for the pilot. The next step was seeing an ISAEC clinician.

I was able to get an appointment within two weeks with an ISAEC APC, Marcia Correale, and was put through an even more rigorous assessment. By the end, it was clear that I needed surgery.

Within a month I had an appointment with a surgeon, Dr. Rampersaud. He helped me better understand what the surgery entailed, and put my mind at ease about expectations for recovery. We went through the risks involved, and I was confident that I was making the right decision. Just a month later, we met again for the pre-surgery consult. I had an MRI done, and everything looked good for surgery the following week. In just three months after seeing my family doctor and starting the ISAEC program, I was scheduled for surgery.

By this time, the pain was excruciating. It felt like lightening shooting from my hip down to my ankle. My mobility was severely limited, and I felt like the 'Hunchback of Notre Pain'. In the week before surgery, I was taking 5-6 percocets per day with limited effect. The morning of the procedure, just getting to the hospital was agonizing.

When I woke up, the pain was gone. The nurse asked me to roll over and I winced, bracing myself for a burst of pain. But there was nothing! Within minutes, I was able to stand up and take a few steps. It was as though a giant's foot had been lifted from my nerve. I literally walked out of the hospital without a trace of pain.

It's been almost four months now since the procedure, and I've got the green light to be active and play sports. I'm still taking things slowly and listening to my body, but it's absolutely remarkable how much better I feel. I'm extremely grateful to the fine folks at ISAEC. It's hard for me to imagine, but without this pilot I'd still be in immense pain waiting for surgery.



Raj Rampersaud, MD  
Clinical Sponsor – Toronto

### Did you know?

Only a small percentage of lumbar disc herniations require surgery