Expandable Magnetic Growing Rod Provides New Treatment Option for Progressive Early-Onset Scoliosis

Two young patients with progressive early-onset scoliosis were the first in North America to be offered treatment with an expandable magnetic rod. Their case reports, provided in an article in the August issue of AORN Journal, describe the use of the magnetic growing rod as a new treatment option that doesn't require multiple hospital admissions with repeated general anesthetics for either noninvasive or invasive surgical procedures.

After the surgeon implants the magnetic growing rod, the patient's family or caregivers expand it non-surgically by manipulating the rod with an external magnet on a schedule designed to obtain and maintain correction while the child grows. The expandable rod helps patients maintain flexibility while correcting their spinal curvatures. Approval for the use of the device in the two children was obtained on compassionate grounds from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Both procedures were performed after institutional review board (IRB) consent and approval.

In addition to providing the patients' case reports, authors Jane M. Wick, BSN, RN, and Julie Konze, BSN, RN, of the Shriners Hospital for Children in Portland, Oregon, compared the use of the expandable magnetic growing rod, called the Phenix Rod, to traditional growing rods. The Phenix Rod was first used seven years ago and, according to background in the article, has been used successfully in Europe and Australia since that time.

The AORN Journal is peer reviewed and provides registered nurses in the operating room and related services with information based on scientific evidence and principle. Articles cover the nurse's roles before, during, and after surgery and include patient teaching and preparation, use and care of surgical instruments and supplies, asepsis, sterilization, anesthesia, and related topics.

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