



RE: Opinion: Pseudoscientific Explanations of Arm Pain, Ring, D., McCarthy, M., JSOA 16(3):105–110, 2007

Dear Editor:

Thanks to Dr. David Ring and Madeline McCarthy, MA, for their contribution in Volume 16, Number 3, Fall 2007, page 105. Not just the upper extremity, but the lower extremity as well, and particularly the spine, are plagued with pseudoscientific diagnoses. Some of this searching for explanations seems to be driven by physicians unwilling to declare they have no solid diagnostic label to apply to the patient's pain. A generation ago, the physician could aver the symptoms were unlikely to be

consequential or permanent, and accompany that position with strong reassurance. Patients are less trusting of this approach these days, partly the media's fault.

Often compensation issues are involved, to which the authors allude. A patient insistent upon the importance of troubling symptoms, which are magnified in the patient's consciousness by the compensation issues, can push a frustrated physician toward a "wastebasket" pseudoscientific diagnosis.

Thanks for bringing this out.

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