

# Emerging Spinecare Trends

## Overview

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Spine disorders account for tens of millions of patient visits each year in the United States. The prevalence of spine and related disorders has grown to epidemic proportions. As people survive longer they develop and suffer from degenerative diseases of the spine. Back pain has become one of the most common reasons for seeing a physician. The growing elderly population will lead to a greater incidence of degenerative spine disorders and related complications. Degenerative disorders include spinal stenosis, hypertrophic arthropathy, intervertebral disc disease, sarcopenia, and osteoporosis. The rising occurrence and complexity of spine disorders will place unprecedented burdens on families, society, and healthcare system. The growing incidence of disorders such as diabetes and obesity will also contribute to the back pain epidemic.

One of the fastest growing concerns in healthcare is the provision of a timely diagnosis and adequate care for individuals with back pain and other spine disorders. Spinecare currently represents one of the more inefficient specialties of healthcare. The rising incidence of back pain and spinal disorders has no geographic boundaries, thus afflicting people of all nations. It is rapidly becoming a healthcare priority with significant personal, social and industrial ramifications. The increased demands will tax regional and world healthcare systems. A comprehensive solution will include the coordinated efforts of an International Spine Organization to help educate and integrate healthcare providers, other organizations, and the public. This parallels the path taken in other fields such as the American Diabetes Association and the American Heart Association, but with a global reach. There will be greater reliance on international databases for physician and public education.

The spine is intricate and complex and therefore often requires the care of one or more spine physicians or specialists. Expanding insights on spinal tissue repair, adaptation, remodeling, and plasticity will continue to influence the type of spinecare provided in the future. A growing appreciation for molecular mechanisms will facilitate an ongoing search for biological solutions. The spinecare of the future will be more predictive, preventive and personalized than it is today. Spinecare will be implemented earlier in the course of dysfunction and/or disease leading to better outcomes. Scientific and technological advances will redefine "early stage disease" and promote conservative intervention during "pre-disease" states.