

I enjoy the challenge of restorative cases where someone has worn down teeth and we're able to give them back their smile as well as the functions of eating and talking."

Dr. Anthony LaVacca
NAPERVILLE DENTAL SPECIALISTS



Brian Powers / Staff photographer

Dr. Anthony LaVacca checks work he performed on a patient. LaVacca anchors Naperville Dental Specialists and General Oral Health Care, which opened in November inside the Main Street Promenade.

BUILDING A PRACTICE ONE SMILE AT A TIME

New dental office strives to be patient-friendly, up-to-date ■ PAGE 2



If only your pain would go away

Local doctor takes integrated approach to pain management

By David Sharos
Special to The Sun

Are you plagued with chronic backache, joint pain, neck pain or headaches that won't go away? Are you one of those unfortunate folks who constantly deal with debilitating chronic pain?

If so, Dr. N. Suwan feels your pain.

Dr. Suwan has been operating the University Pain Centers Headache Clinic that is affiliated with Rush Pain Center in Wheaton since 2000, and the Midwest Specialty Headache Clinic and Advanced Pain and Spine Physician Center in Naperville since 2005. The board-certified neurologist and pain management specialist brings a diverse educational background to her practice. Dr. Suwan is proud of being Chicago's Loyola University Neurology Graduate.

Suwan said her specialty in neurology eventually gave way to work in pain management, which she describes as "a fascinating field." She is diplomat of the American boards of Neurology, Pain Medicine and Electrodiagnostic Medicine with extra

certification in headache medicine.

Finding the source

"Finding the origin of pain should go hand in hand with treating the pain," Suwan said. "In terms of patient care, it's important to find out where the pain is coming from.

"Pain is now considered the fifth vital sign, something that doctors need to assess in addition to a patient's temperature, pulse, respiration and blood pressure. Pain is often a symptom underlying another medical condition," she said.

Headaches, Suwan said, are not just the natural outcome of a sinus infection or tension. Other causes could include pinched nerves, neck problems, an infection, or even low or high pressure of the fluid surrounding the brain.

Patients at Suwan's clinic run the gamut in age from 14 to beyond 80 years. About 50 percent are women, 40 percent men and 10 percent children.

Back pain could be caused by a variety of medical conditions that may range from simple spasm and pulled muscle pain to pinched



Brian Powers / Staff photographer

Dr. N. Suwan talks to a patient about the effects of migraine headaches and how to best treat them. "Finding the origin of pain should go hand in hand with treating the pain," Suwan said.

nerves due to herniated discs to very serious medical conditions that should not be overlooked.

Suwan said most of her clients come from referrals, either by physicians or previous patients. Her services in-

clude an impressive arsenal of treatments.

"We try to help patients with back pain to avoid back surgery," she said. "We use epidural injections, nerve blocks, Botox injections, spinal cord stimulation, nu-

cleoplasty (a minimally invasive procedure used for back pain patients with herniated discs and pinched nerves) as well as more traditional medical pharmacology," she said. "Our goal is to obtain an extensive history of the pa-

tient, and then complete the required testing to evaluate what the problem is."

Suwan's training and credentials have not gone unnoticed. She has teamed up

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Landscape company announces merger

Sun staff

Jeff Korhan of Naperville, founder of Tremendous Landscape Co., has announced the merger of his company with Great Impressions, the residential division of Bartlett-based Sebert Landscaping.

Korhan started Tremendous Landscape Co. 20 years ago, focusing on the landscape needs of residential customers in the Naperville area. Tremendous has grown into a full service design-build and maintenance company recognized for its innovative designs with signature stonework and color displays.

Among Tremendous' many local and national awards is being named Business of the Year by the Naperville Chamber of Commerce in 2005.

Sebert Landscaping was formed in 1985, and has grown consistently to join the ranks of the top 50 landscape companies nationwide. In 2006, Sebert acquired Great Impressions to focus exclusively on the needs of residential customers, establishing a Naperville branch that is being expanded to serve the clients of Tremendous Landscape Co.

"This partnership brings together the innovation and creativity that have made Tremendous a leader in the western suburbs, together with Great Impressions' customer service and production capabilities, which have been a key to our success," Sebert said in a release.

Korhan brings more than 30 years of sales and marketing experience and industry leadership to the venture. He is a board member of the Professional Landcare Network, a certified landscape professional, certified arborist, and registered landscape architect. Korhan also speaks and publishes frequently in the green industry, and works with other business owners and sales professionals to build their businesses.

"This partnership blends two common philosophies to create a stronger company that is positioned to competitively serve the increasingly sophisticated customers in our markets," Korhan said.



Brian Powers / Staff photographer

Dr. A. Elborno treats a patient with lower back pain using an X-ray machine known as the "C-Arm," which allows Elborno to take real-time X-rays to better guide his hand in the minimally invasive procedure that would treat pinched nerve pain and back pain. This is performed as a same-day procedure. "We try to help patients to avoid traditional back surgeries and long hospital stays," Elborno said.

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with colleague Dr. A. Elborno, who currently serves as medical director of the Hinsdale Hospital Pain management Center of Excellence. Stories of her work have been published in a variety of local magazines, and Elborno has appeared on Fox News, where he spoke about controlling the pinched nerve pain of a Naperville woman with a flip of a switch. "Spinal cord stimulator is the latest in medical science for treatment of intractable low back pain and leg pain," she said.

Latest treatments

One patient, Barnard Kryszak, 46, of Plainfield, experienced headaches as a result of a stroke he suffered in 2002. Kryszak learned of Suwan's practice through a presentation she gave at a suburban library, and he has since become a joint patient of both Suwan and Elborno.

While his headaches have not entirely disappeared, Kryszak said his discomfort is half what it used to be.

"Dr. Suwan tried a number of medications in order to help me, and she was willing to keep working until we found something that didn't include side effects like being sleepy all the time," Kryszak said. "Dr. Elborno then implanted a peripheral nerve stimulator, which I can control with an external device. Certain smells and sounds still can trigger headaches, but with the stimulator, I'm able to control things better."

Naperville resident Jerry Koudelik, 58, also found relief – after working with Suwan and then Elborno – for his neck and arm pain that resulted from pinched nerves. Dr. Elborno installed a spinal cord stimulator in Koudelik's back, which blocks pain messages from the nerves.

"After the stimulator, my pain levels have dropped two-thirds of what they were," Koudelik said.

"We do not start with the nerve stimulator treatment," Suwan said.

"We always start with conservative management." However, there are always more advanced treatment options if needed.

Pain, Suwan said, is part of the world we live in, and is likely to be more prevalent. One of her other specialties is treating patients with carpal tunnel syndrome, an ailment born of the computer age.

"With carpal tunnel, patients would complain of pain, numbness and weakness in the hand and arm. There are so many issues to look at before diagnosing carpal tunnel syndrome, from pinched nerves in the arm or neck or even generalized process affecting the nerves," she said. "Given our lifestyle today, there are going to be more problems. People are so busy these days, and don't take the time to care for themselves or even relax. Some patients develop psychosomatic symptoms, which are a part of pain, followed by depression, followed by pain again. It's a vicious cycle."

Caring for patients

Happily, many patients find relief, and quickly, at Suwan's clinic.

A noticeable change in pain levels, she said, isn't usually a three- to six-month project, but rather a few days or weeks.

"Once patients come, we thoroughly evaluate them to find the origin of the pain. I believe that half of the problem is gone right then," she said. "There is not just one type of treatment – every patient is a 'book' by himself."

"Our mission is to find the origin of the pain, and not to mask it," she said. "Our goal is to enhance our patients' quality of life, ability to enjoy daily activities and functionality. We accomplish this by taking an integrated approach to pain management, providing consultation and treatment to individuals with acute and chronic pain. Each patient's treatment is individually tailored based on a comprehensive patient evaluation conducted by our skilled team of physicians."

"We are dedicated to the highest standard of medical care and to the latest techniques in medical science."