

SpineColorado acts as a regional center of excellence for back and neck problems, and a significant part of the practice is devoted to research. A recent study, in partnership with the Cleveland Clinic Foundation and UCLA, looked at fusion rates following anterior cervical fusion with and without steroids. To compile and analyze the data from the multi-center study, the participants turned to Syndicom and its widely embraced SpineConnect platform - currently in use by over 900 spine surgeons worldwide. Using SpineConnect's ResearchEdge, the surgeons uploaded the data and images to one centralized location for easy management. Later, data was quickly extrapolated to produce an abstract that was accepted at the Cervical Spine Research Society's Annual Meeting.

Situation

SpineColorado acts as a regional center of excellence for back and neck problems with an emphasis on a non-surgical approach by bringing different specialists together from a variety of surgical and non-surgical disciplines in one clinic to diagnose and treat back pain patients. A significant part of the practice is devoted to research supported by a full-time research and education coordinator. Multiple clinical and basic science studies are presently underway at SpineColorado. These include IDE studies and internally driven research projects related to spine surgery.

Through his involvement in the SpineConnect community, Dr. Jim Youssef, a partner at SpineColorado, was able to identify and enlist spine surgeons to participate in a multi-center clinical research study on the effect of IV steroids on cervical fusion results. The resulting collaborative study involved surgeons from SpineColorado, the Cleveland Clinic Foundation and UCLA, and included over 30 patient cases.

Because it was a multi-center study, the participating surgeons needed an easy and efficient way to manage the case submission process, analyze the data, and ultimately produce an abstract for the Cervical Spine Research Society Annual Meeting. "We don't have the considerable resources available at other sites," said Youssef. "We needed a way to manage the study that didn't require an inordinate amount of staff and resources."

Solution

To meet the study's needs, Youssef approached Syndicom, the developers of SpineConnect, the largest on-line community of spine surgeons.

"It struck me that many of the features within SpineConnect could be tweaked for our purposes. Furthermore, the other surgeons collaborating on the study were already SpineConnect members so I felt that by using similar tools, the learning curve would be low and the training costs negligible," said Youssef.

Working with Jeffrey Wang and Wellington Hsu (UCLA), Thomas Mroz and Isador Lieberman (Cleveland Clinic Foundation), and Youssef (SpineColorado), Syndicom developed a customized form based on SpineConnect's Case Wizard for entering the research data into a ResearchEdge Private Network (PN) group. The form collects demographic and diagnostic data, image study data, and patient assessment scores.

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Jim Youssef, M.D.
SpineColorado

Follow-up assessments and imaging were also captured. Results were easily extrapolated and exported into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. “As you can imagine, gathering, compiling, and analyzing the data involving this number of cases in multiple locations would ordinarily take an extraordinary amount of effort,” said Youssef. “With SpineConnect’s ResearchEdge, the participating surgeons easily uploaded all their cases in one location in a standardized format. We were able to complete the study in less than two weeks, and produce an abstract for presentation at the CSRS Annual Meeting as a result.”

“***I will definitely be using SpineConnect in any future research endeavors. The ease in which we were able to compile these cases and extract the data certainly makes it an invaluable resource for any research study.***”

Thomas Mroz, M.D.
Cleveland Clinic Foundation

Dr. Thomas Mroz of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation concurred, “I will definitely be using SpineConnect in any future research endeavors. The ease in which we were able to compile these cases and extract the data certainly makes it an invaluable resource for any research study.”

Benefits

By using SpineConnect ResearchEdge, a group of surgeons at multiple sites was able to streamline and accelerate the process of compiling, managing and exporting research data resulting in superior data collection at lower costs.

Accelerate the Research Process

ResearchEdge accelerates the research process using an intuitive, familiar tool to SpineConnect members. Surgeons, already used to the SpineConnect Case Wizard, can quickly enter data in ResearchEdge’s customized but familiar case template form. Surgeons can also compile and export the data rapidly because all the data is entered in a standardized format.

Streamline Case Management

All the research data is stored in one location, making compilations fast and easy. Participating surgeons can manage multiple sites simultaneously – reducing redundancy and increasing productivity. In addition, all the surgeons can see the same data as the research study unfolds, creating a unique collaborative effort.

Lower Costs

Because of the multi-center nature of the research study and ResearchEdge’s ability to centralize the data collection, costs were dramatically reduced – especially relative to existing software alternatives or the traditional manual process. The participating surgeons did not need to keep track of multiple copies of the data forms, re-enter data (causing potential data transfer errors), or manage different file formats. Instead, all the data was entered and uploaded in a customized form built on SpineConnect’s existing platform.

For More Information

For more information about Syndicom products and services, call Syndicom at (970) 385-4250 or visit www.syndicom.com.