

Painful Diabetic Neuropathy: Another Option for Patients

By Shai N. Gozani, M.D., Ph.D.

Painful diabetic neuropathy (PDN) is characterized by burning, stabbing or shooting pain in the feet or legs. Primarily caused by diabetes-related nerve degeneration, it affects one quarter of all diabetes patients. In addition to chronic pain, many patients also have insomnia, anxiety and depression. PDN patients tend to have a low quality of life and are among the heaviest users of health care resources.

PDN patients are potential beneficiaries of the SENSUS™ Pain Management System, a new wearable neurostimulation technology developed by NeuroMetrix, Inc. Unlike pain medications—which can be hard for patients to tolerate—SENSUS is both easy and convenient for patients to use. It is non-invasive and worn on the leg, just below the knee, and is activated by simply pressing a button. Whenever the patient needs pain relief, they activate the device and it will comfortably stimulate the sensory nerves in their legs. Each session lasts 60 minutes with pain relief starting in about 10 minutes, and often lasting 30 minutes following the end of the session. The mechanism of action is thought to relate to increased levels of endogenous opioids that act through the delta opioid receptor to block pain signal transmission in the spinal cord.

This approach to pain management offers several benefits to patients. First and foremost, it offers fast-acting relief from chronic pain. Second, it is non-narcotic and non-addictive, without significant side effects. Third, the easy, one-button control means patients do not have to fumble with advanced instrumentation. Furthermore, the device is lightweight and low-profile, and can even be worn under clothing.

Patients who have used SENSUS describe the stimulation it generates as a buzzing or light pressure sensation; patients are in control and can reduce the intensity if it feels uncomfortable. Many who have been prescribed the device have spoken positively about it. “The first time, it only took 10 minutes before the pain went away,” says one. “My pain level went from an ‘8 out of 10’ to a ‘2’ or ‘3’. I’m getting as much or more relief using SENSUS than I was taking pills,” adds a second user. A third adds: “I’m noticing in the morning, I’m able to get up and around much easier than I was before, without experiencing the excruciating pain.... I sometimes forget [SENSUS] is even there. When I activate it, I feel like I can do just about anything. It gives me a level of relief I wasn’t experiencing with anything else.”

One of the major advantages of SENSUS is its benefit to patients suffering from insomnia secondary to PDN. Because of its convenient size and shape, the device can be worn to bed; it is the only transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulator cleared for overnight use by the FDA. This allows those with PDN to better fall asleep and get a good night’s rest—which is critical for people with diabetes.

Physicians prescribe SENSUS and the device is provided by a medical supplier. Whether prescribed by itself or in conjunction with common pain medications like gabapentin, pregabalin and duloxetine, SENSUS can be a source of on-demand pain relief for PDN patients at the push of a button.

If you are interested in learning more about SENSUS or wish to prescribe it for your PDN patients, please visit SENSUSRx.com.

Shai N. Gozani, M.D., Ph.D. is President and Chief Executive Officer of NeuroMetrix, Inc., a medical device company focused on treatment and management of chronic pain and peripheral neuropathies.



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