Di Lorenzo L, Pappagallo M, et al. Pain relief in early rehabilitation of rotator cuff tendinitis: any role for indirect suprascapular nerve block? Eura Medicophys 2006;42:198-204

Design: randomized clinical trial

Study question: For patients with rotator cuff tendonitis, is suprascapular nerve block (SSNB) more effective than standard rehabilitation without nerve block?

Reasons not to cite as evidence:

- The selection criteria lack enough information to identify any particular rotator cuff condition
    - Physical examination findings were apparently used to identify patients who had rotator cuff tendonitis without biceps tears or adhesive capsulitis, but the method of patient selection is incompletely described; for example, ultrasound, CT and MRI were "performed only when needed and indicated," but the criteria for "needed and indicated" is not clear, nor is the number of patients who received them
- The description of the rehabilitation program lacks enough information to allow it to be prescribed for an individual patient or to allow a researcher to duplicate the study; the rationale for the exercises is given, but information concerning whether the patients had some sessions with a physiotherapist, whether the instructions were tailored to the individual patient, and how frequently they were to be done, is lacking
- The primary outcome of pain was done on an ordinary 10 point VAS scale, but there is a confusing statement that "pain since the SSNB was documented" rather than pain from the beginning of each intervention (i.e., since the start of rehabilitation for the group which had rehabilitation before crossing over to SSNB)