

# Lower backache?

## **FIX IT** For severe conditions like slipped disk or spondylolisthesis, MAST can be an excellent treatment modality, explains **Dr Manoj Miglani**

Increasing desk jobs, compounded with stress and lack of exercise, is making back pain one of the most common ailments in the country. The incidence of lower back pain is rising and every second patient coming with this complaint is a working professional. Due to prolonged sitting and working in front of computer monitors, people tend to stress their back beyond its natural capacity, thereby leading to back pain, more commonly in the lower back region.

Severe lower back aches can lead to several medical conditions, starting from mild ones like muscle sprain to severe conditions such as slipped disk or spondylolisthesis, depending on the level of exertion. While mild conditions can be handled with medications or physiotherapy, severe conditions sometimes require surgery. However, since most conditions initially manifest as back pain, often the real problem remains undiagnosed for a long time, thereby not just delaying the treatment, but worsening the condition as well.

Fortunately, with the advent of modern technologies like Minimal Access Spine

Technology (MAST), spine surgery has evolved tremendously, making it extremely safe, effective and patient-friendly. However, due to lack of information, patients keep enduring the pain, without seeking treatment. For severe conditions like slipped disk (herniated disk) or spondylolisthesis, if the patient is not responding to medication and physiotherapy, MAST is an excellent treatment modality.

In some MAST approaches, also called “keyhole surgeries,” surgeons use a tiny endoscope with a camera on the end, which is inserted through a small incision in the skin. The camera provides surgeons with an internal view, enabling surgical access to the affected area of the spine. This way, the surgical scarring on the patient’s skin is minimal. That’s why MAST suits the necessities of working people who cannot afford to take a long break from work, or are afraid to go for conventional surgeries that leave ugly scars. MAST also decreases operative blood loss, and aides faster return to normal function.

*(The writer is an orthopaedic surgeon, Fortis Flt. Lt. Rajan Dhall Hospital, Delhi)*

