Rescue Ultrasound-Guided Supra-Inguinal Fascia Iliaca Block for Refractory Postoperative Pain Following Total Hip Arthroplasty

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Background

- Severe pain after total hip arthroplasty (THA) can persist despite systemic opioids, delaying rehabilitation.
- The supra-inguinal fascia iliaca block (SIFIB) places local anesthetic beneath the fascia iliaca, spreading cephalad toward the femoral and lateral femoral cutaneous nerves.
- We used SIFIB as a rescue block when IV opioids failed.

Case

- 58-year-old woman, BMI 30 kg/m², ASA III; elective THA under general anesthesia.
- PACU: pain 9/10 despite IV hydromorphone 2 mg; Acute Pain Service consulted.
- Single-shot, ultrasound-guided SIFIB with 30 mL ropivacaine 0.5%; real-time imaging confirmed cephalad spread beneath the fascia iliaca.

Written informed consent was obtained from the patient for presentation and publication of this case report. All patient information has been de-identified.

A rescue supra-inguinal fascia iliaca block took pain from **9/10 to 1/10 in 15 minutes**, with no further opioids for 24 hours.

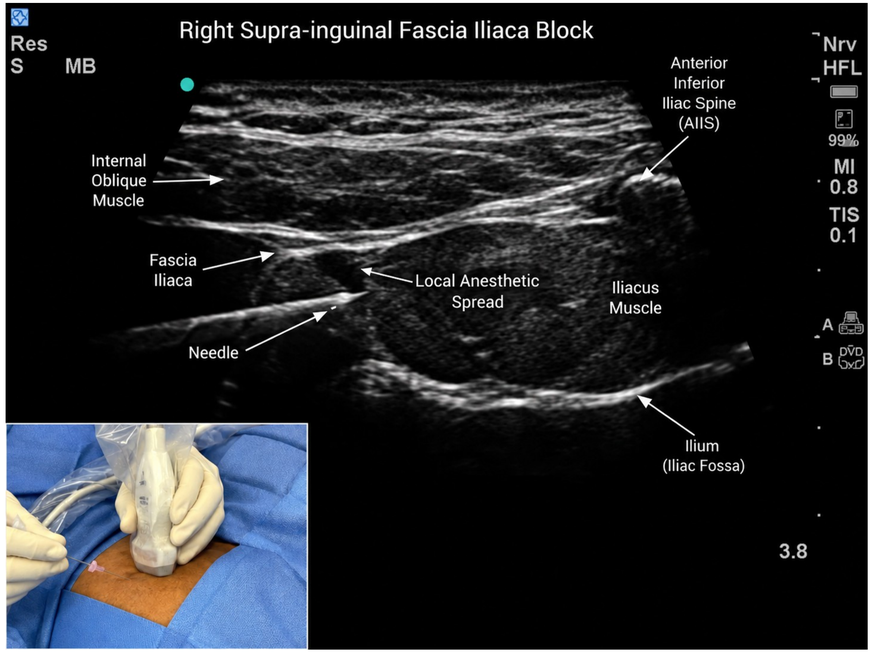
9 → 1
Pain score (NRS) within 15 minutes

0
Additional opioid doses over 24 hours

POD 1
Full physical therapy and discharge home

Perioperative timeline (number = pain score, NRS 0–10)

0 min	+45 min	+50 min	+60 min	+75 min	24 h	POD 1
—	9	9	9	1	—	—
THA under general anesthesia	Severe pain in PACU	IV hydromorphone 2 mg; no relief	SIFIB: 30 mL ropivacaine 0.5%	Femoral + LFCN sensory block	No opioids; full physical therapy	Discharged home; no complications or LAST



Right SIFIB, parasagittal view. Needle in-plane; local anesthetic pools beneath the fascia iliaca, above the iliacus. AIIS, anterior inferior iliac spine.

Takeaways

- SIFIB can rescue severe post-THA pain when opioids fail: fast relief, no further opioids for 24 h, on-time physical therapy.
- Spread to individual lumbar plexus branches varies, and one case cannot show superiority over other blocks.
- A targeted rescue block belongs in multimodal THA recovery pathways.

References
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