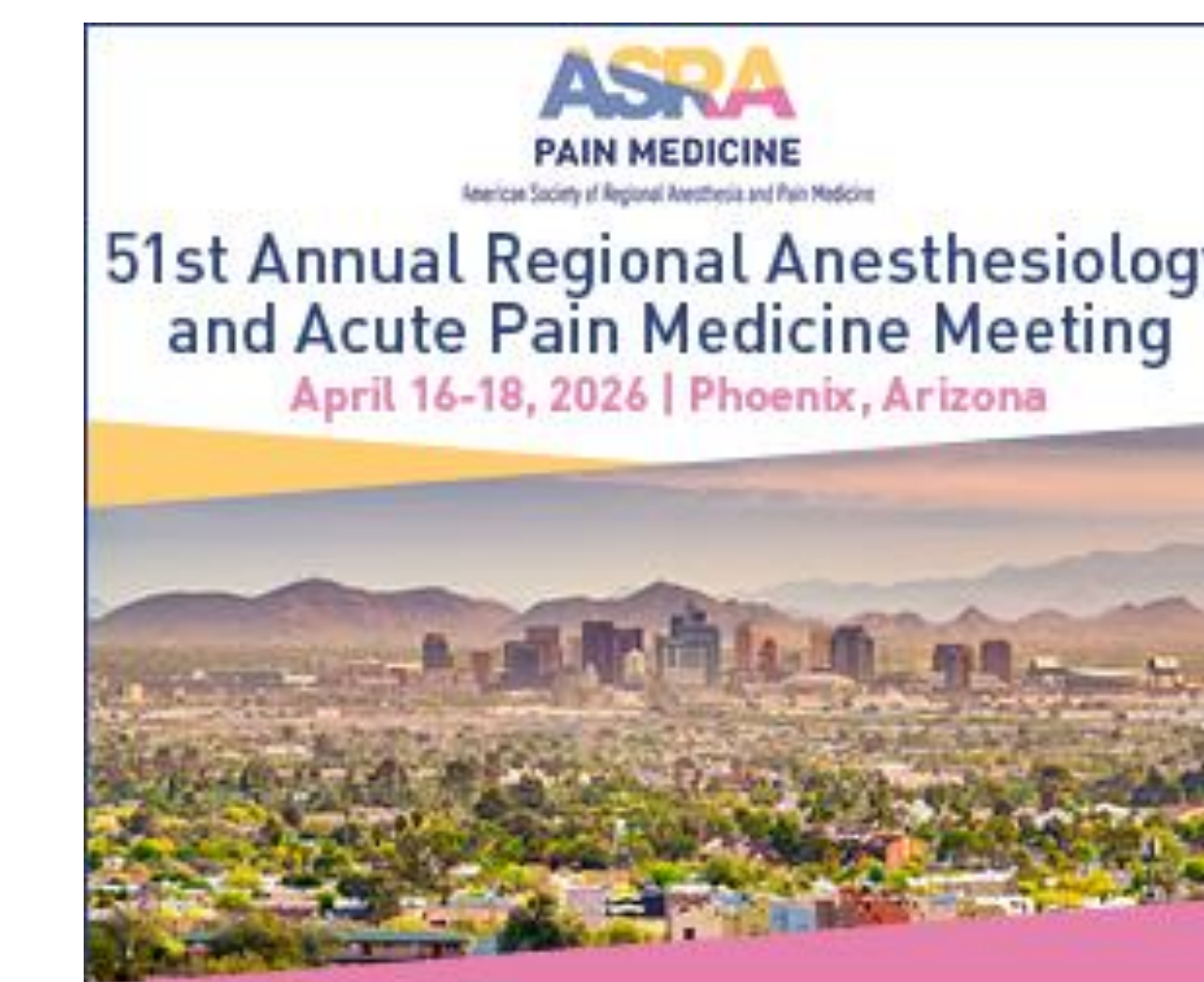


Cervical Dystonia Causing Occipital Neuralgia— Targeted Occipital Nerve Blocks Can Provide Dramatic Relief



Introduction

- Cervical dystonia can produce severe neck and head pain beyond myofascial and degenerative nociceptive sources related to abnormal cervical posture.
- Occipital neuralgia may arise in this population due to altered cervical biomechanics and chronic mechanical irritation/stretch of the occipital nerves.
- This mechanism remains underrecognized and may lead to persistent posterior head pain despite conventional therapies.

Case

- 60 yo woman with rheumatoid arthritis and severe cervical spondylosis
- Developed progressive rightward head tilt over 3-4 years
- Posture evolved into fixed right laterocollis consistent with cervical dystonia
- Primary complaint became severe posterior neck pain radiating to the occipital scalp
- Pain associated with paraspinal tightness and functional limitation
- Given the symptom distribution and refractory nature of pain, bilateral greater and lesser occipital nerve blocks were performed

Outcome

The patient experienced **complete resolution of her occipital head pain** following bilateral greater and lesser occipital nerve blockade.



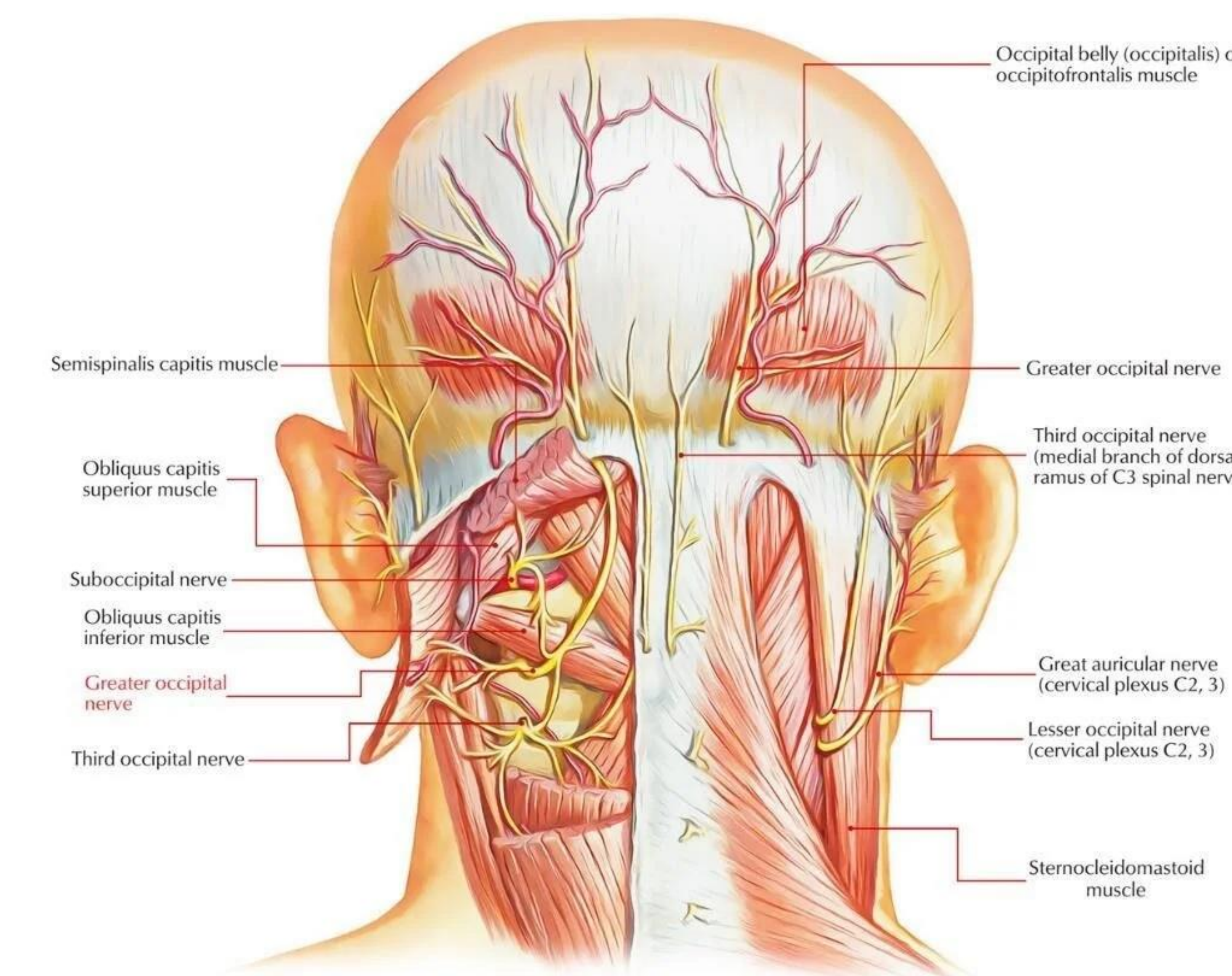
Conclusion

This case highlights occipital neuralgia as a distinct and treatable pain generator in patients with cervical dystonia. Chronic abnormal cervical positioning may lead to mechanical stretch and irritation of the occipital nerves, contributing to neuropathic head pain. Recognition of this mechanism is important, as targeted peripheral nerve blocks can provide substantial symptom relief even when dystonic posture remains fixed.

Clinical Pearl

Posterior scalp pain in cervical dystonia may represent occipital neuralgia.

Targeted greater and lesser occipital nerve blocks can provide dramatic analgesia.



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