

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Why Some People With Chronic Pain Spend Years Treating the Wrong Problem

Jason W. Siefferman, MD, explains how complex pain can involve multiple legitimate diagnoses, incomplete explanations, and years of treatment without a clear understanding of the full clinical picture



NEW YORK, NY, DATE. ***“I’ve tried everything.”***

It is a statement Jason W. Siefferman, MD, hears frequently from **people living with complex chronic pain**.

They may arrive with years of medical records, imaging studies, specialist evaluations, medications, physical therapy, procedures, and multiple diagnoses. Many have received appropriate care for legitimate problems. Yet their symptoms persist.

For Dr. Siefferman, founder and medical director of Manhattan Pain Medicine, the explanation is not always that someone previously made the wrong diagnosis. Complex pain can accumulate layers over time, with several legitimate findings or diagnoses each explaining only part of what a person is experiencing.

A diagnosis can be correct without explaining everything. A treatment may appropriately address one part of the problem while another remains. Over time, a person can accumulate many pieces of the clinical picture without developing a clear understanding of how those pieces relate.

That distinction is central to Dr. Siefferman’s approach to difficult-to-explain pain and to *Pain, Answered*, his book reframing chronic pain as a journey with identifiable stages and a framework for navigating diagnosis, treatment, and the path toward healing.

Beyond “Misdiagnosis”

The word “misdiagnosis” can create a compelling headline, but Dr. Siefferman believes it often oversimplifies what happens to people living with complex pain.

Medicine is divided into specialties for good reason. A neurologist may evaluate one set of symptoms. A rheumatologist may investigate another. A pain physician, rehabilitation specialist, orthopedist, gynecologist, or other clinician may appropriately address another part of the patient's experience.

Problems can arise when those individual conclusions remain disconnected. A person may accumulate several accurate diagnoses while still lacking a clinical framework that explains how those findings relate, what is driving the pain, and why it may be persisting.

Previous treatment failures can also become valuable information.

What happens after treatment can become part of the diagnostic process. When the response does not match the working expectation, that information should help shape the next clinical question.

Reconstructing the Clinical Story

At Manhattan Pain Medicine, complex cases begin with Discovery: understanding what hurts, why it hurts, how the problem developed, and why it may be persisting. That process may involve revisiting the chronology of symptoms, previous diagnoses, imaging, medications, procedures, treatment responses, physical findings, and input from other disciplines.

The objective is not to dismiss previous care or start over simply for the sake of starting over. It is to determine whether the existing explanation still adequately accounts for the patient's current experience.

That approach forms part of the practice's broader model: Discovery → Treatment → Maintenance.

Discovery and Treatment are iterative rather than strictly linear: treatment response can confirm, refine, or challenge the working explanation and return the process to Discovery when necessary.

The questions behind these prolonged pain journeys also helped inspire *Pain, Answered*: Why did the treatment not work? Why do different doctors provide different explanations? Why do I have multiple diagnoses? What should happen when the current plan stops making sense?

Dr. Siefferman will continue exploring these questions through *Care Beyond the Pain*, a filmed podcast featuring conversations with physicians, clinicians, patients, caregivers, healthcare leaders, and other experts about the chronic pain journey from multiple perspectives.

The broader message is not that every difficult case contains a hidden diagnosis waiting to be discovered. It is that people living with complex pain deserve a clinical process capable of reconsidering the whole story when individual answers stop being sufficient.

About Jason W. Siefferman, MD

Jason W. Siefferman, MD, is founder and medical director of Manhattan Pain Medicine and is triple board-certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Pain Medicine, and Headache Medicine. His clinical focus includes complex chronic pain and conditions that may cross conventional diagnostic and specialty boundaries. He is the author of *Pain, Answered* and host of *Care Beyond the Pain*.

About Manhattan Pain Medicine

Manhattan Pain Medicine is a multidisciplinary medical practice in New York City focused on the evaluation and management of complex pain. Its clinical model is organized around Discovery, Treatment, and Maintenance, emphasizing diagnostic reasoning, individualized treatment, multidisciplinary collaboration, patient education, and long-term support.

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