Just prior to impact, Ms. Lema was looking to her left and aware of the defendant’s vehicle approaching. On impact, she was looking straight ahead, and braced herself. Her left knee hit ‘something in the car.’ The side airbags deployed, striking the left side of Ms. Lema’s body/left arm; she immediately felt a throbbing pain in her left shoulder and tingling in the whole of her left upper extremity (she had to kick the driver’s door open to get out as she was unable to open it with her left arm). EMS responded, checked her vitals but she declined ambulance transportation to the ED for further evaluation. Ms. Lema left the crash scene and headed straight home (driven by her spouse). She rested for the remainder of the weekend.

On January 17, 2022, 2 days after the crash, Ms. Lema presented to Meilys Sanchez APRN-BC with complaints of pain in her left shoulder and left arm and left sided neck pain. Ms. Sanchez diagnosed left shoulder sprain with decreased range of motion, cervicalgia, muscle spasms and myositis; recommended chiropractic/physical therapy, and prescribed Robaxin 500 mg for the muscle spasms.

On January 20, 2022, Ms. Lema presented to Dr. Vicky Poulakis (chiropractic) with increasing pain in her left shoulder with numbness and tingling in the left arm. Dr. Poulakis initiated therapeutic modalities and recommended treatment 3 times/week. Ms. Lema completed approximately 30 chiropractic treatments.

On February 9, 2022, Ms. Lema presented to Dr. Jose Garcia-Troncoso (general surgery) with neck pain, upper back pain, left shoulder pain, left knee pain and an airbag burn over her left hip. Dr. Garcia ordered MRIs of the cervical and lumbar spine and endorsed continuing therapy.

On February 21, 2022, Ms. Lema underwent an MRI of the cervical spine which revealed: early spondylosis at C4-5 through C6-7 with multilevel facet joint arthropathy, reverse cervical lordosis, cervical scoliosis, and grade 1 anterolisthesis at C3-4; protruding posterior disk herniations at C3-4, 4-5, 5-6 and 6-7 indenting the anterior thecal sac.

On March 2, 2022, Ms. Lema presented to Dr. Kamaldeen Saldin (neurology) with neck/periscapular pain radiating to the bilateral trapezii with associated headaches and upper-mid back pain. Dr. Saldin diagnosed cervicalgia, brachial neuritis, thoracic spine pain, prescribed a Medrol Dosepak and recommended cervical epidurals with persistent pain.

By April 2022, the left shoulder pain was improving but pain persisted in her neck and upper back. The low back pain remained stable at pre-crash baseline (refer to prior history).

On April 14, 2022, Ms. Lema returned to Dr. Saldin with persistent cervicalgia and increasing pain in the left shoulder. Dr. Saldin reiterated recommendations for a cervical epidural injection.

On April 28, 2022, Dr. Saldin performed a cervical epidural steroid injection (ESI) at C7-T1, providing 75% relief, with some residual neck pain radiating to the bilateral trapezii with associated headache.

On May 26, 2022, Dr. Saldin discussed repeating the cervical (right sided facet) ESI.

On October 11, 2022, Ms. Lema revisited Dr. Saldin. The cervical ESI had ‘worn off’ and she requested more definitive treatment for the cervical radicular symptoms. Dr. Saldin recommended proceeding with a cervical discectomy at C5-6 and 6-7 with bilateral neurotomy.

**On November 30, 2022, Dr. Saldin performed a right sided discectomy at C5-6 and 6-7 with radiofrequency ablation at C4-6, bilaterally.**

Post-surgery she had numbness in the base of her neck, right sided neck/periscapular pain with headaches. Dr. Saldin recommended starting physical therapy and applying lidocaine, as needed, to the affected areas.

On March 28, 2023, Ms. Lema returned to Dr. Saldin with persistent (although improving with therapy) cervical radicular symptomatology. She was encouraged to continue therapy then participate in a home exercise program. Height: 5 ft 2 inches, weight: 155 lbs.

*Pre-crash medical history*

Low back pain after falling downstairs approximately 25 years prior. She received chiropractic care which concluded 10 years prior to the subject crash. Some residual pain persisted/stabilized.

On June 5, 2020, Ms. Lema underwent a Dexa scan of the lumbar spine and left hip which revealed osteopenia. Prior history, however, is non-contributory to post-crash diagnoses.

*Medical and other records reviewed for history*

Luz Lema, deposition July 25, 2023

MRI Associates, Palm Harbor

OFC Family Practice (prior)

Hess Spinal & Medical Centers, Dr. Garcia

Elite Spine & Orthopedics, Dr. Saldin