

Dr. Tyndall's Spine "Cheat Sheet"

10 Spine Concepts every adjuster and case manager should know (Part 1)

1. HNP (aka slipped disc):

Known by many names but this is essentially when a lumbar disc herniation pushes out compresses a nerve causing nerve pain.

2. Lumbar stenosis:

Narrowing in the lumbar spine which makes the lumbar canal and the space for the nerves smaller therefore compressing the nerves. This often leads to nerve pain in the patient's back and their legs.

3. Cervical radiculopathy:

Nerve pain due to cervical/neck nerve compression. Patients can complain of neck, shoulder, arm pain or numbness and/or tingling and even weakness.

4. Lumbar radiculopathy:

Same as cervical except the nerve pain is in the back and down one or both legs.

5. Waddell's signs:

These are physical examination signs which can indicate that a patient is not in being truthful during their examination.

6. Neurogenic vs osteoarthritic back pain:

Back pain can be caused by osteoarthritis (that is the wear and tear on the spine) or by nerves being compressed (neurogenic).

7. Spondylolisthesis:

The slippage of one vertebrae in front to another. There are five types of spondylolisthesis with the most common being the degenerative (age related) type. Patients will complain of back and leg pain which is worse with walking and relieved by sitting down or bending over.

8. ALIF vs. TLIF vs PLIF vs XLIF:

These are different types of lumbar interbody (between the vertebrae) fusion. **ALIF** means Anterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion in which the fusion is done from the front of the spine. **TLIF** means Transforaminal Lumbar Interbody Fusion in which the fusion is done through where the nerve comes out of the spine. **PLIF** means Posterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion which the fusion is done from the back of the spine. **XLIF** means eXtreme Lateral Interbody Fusion in which the fusion is done from the side of the spine.

9. Cervical myelopathy:

Unlike cervical radiculopathy which means nerve pain; myelopathy refers to symptoms from the nerve cells in the neck being damaged. Patients will present with symptoms such as gait imbalance, dropping objects, muscle weakness and muscle wasting especially in their hands.

10. ACDF vs TDR:

These techniques are different surgical solutions to a cervical disc herniation. ACDF means Anterior Cervical Discectomy and Fusion where the cervical disc is removed and replaced with bone to cause a fusing or joining together of the adjacent vertebrae. This technique is often accompanied by anterior instrumentation. TDR means Total Disc Replacement. In this technique the disc is removed and replaced with a device to preserve motion between the adjacent vertebral bodies.

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