



Low Back Pain increases as Children Age

Results of a long-term study of healthy school age children showed that 59% had low back pain by the time they reached 18 to 19 years of age, with 9% of the children reporting low back pain by 7 to 8 years of age.

Teija Lund, MD, PhD, who presented the findings at the 2011 International Society for the Study of the Lumbar Spine Annual Meeting said that she and her colleagues tried to define the starting point of changes that typically correlate with low back pain by studying 95 healthy first-grade students in the Helsinki Finland area (51 girls, 44 boys).

At about age 19 years, 15% of the children studied had on MRI discernable disc changes.

The children were evaluated at 7 to 8 years of age including a lateral X-ray of the lumbar spine, 12 to 13 years of age, and again when they were 18 to 19 years old with a 92% follow-up rate at the last time point. By the age of 18 and 19, 15% of young adults demonstrated black discs and the rate of other significant MRI findings had increased to almost 60% with most of these low back changes.

According to Dr.Lund, there is a significant increase in both MRI findings and low back pain during the growth spurt of early school age children, but we couldn't find any correlation between MRI findings and low back pain.

Although no clear predictive factors emerged from this study Abnormal foot alignment could be a contributing factor to be considered since it has been shown to not only adversely affect the foot and knee creating abnormal pelvic rotation resulting in an increased lumbosacral angle and early onset low back pain.

Reference:

Lund T, Klemetti E, Lohman M, et al. Lumbar disc changes on MRI and low back pain. A prospective long-term study in healthy volunteers from childhood to maturity. Paper #P20. Presented at the International Society for the Study of the Lumbar Spine Annual Meeting 2011. June 14-18. Gottenburg, Sweden.

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