

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Importance of Hyaline Material in Herniated Lumbar Disk Pathology: Predicting the Presence of Hyaline from Preoperative Magnetic Resonance Imaging and its Clinical Significance

Dear Sir,

I read the article "Importance of Hyaline Material in Herniated Lumbar Disk Pathology: Predicting the Presence of Hyaline from Preoperative Magnetic Resonance Imaging and its Clinical Significance" published in *The Journal of Spinal surgery*, 2015, volume 2, number 2, pages 42 to 47. This is one of the good articles I have read in the recent period. It appears that authors had a hypothesis in their mind which they tested in clinical settings using a suitable research methodology in a prospective way. They worked in two levels – first correlating preoperative magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) findings with the presence of hyaline and, second, presence of hyaline with postoperative outcome. Histopathological examination was conducted for the accurate identification of composition of disk material. They concluded that presence of hyaline can be predicted from MRI and the presence predicts better postoperative outcome. To the best of my knowledge, this the first time the matter is discussed in Indian scenario. Findings and discussions in the study will help the spine surgeons in decision-making. However, I suggest the authors to follow the study by recruiting more patients in the future, because of the following reasons: (1) The subject is not well discussed in the literature. (2) In the present study, only about 1/4th of patients had presence of hyaline. The magnitude of difference in the postoperative visual analog scale (VAS) score of 3.07 in group I (hyaline present) and 3.17 in group II (hyaline absent) appears to be minimal from the clinical point of view. Hence, a study with larger number of patients will make the statistical association clearer and stronger and also may help in excluding or including any confounding factors, such as duration of radicular pain, gender, nature of occupation, and other habits, such as smoking.

I congratulate the authors for bringing up this study which is having a novel design and interesting findings.

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