

Evidence Discussion

Discography is an important method for diagnosing discogenic low back pain (LBP) and replicating the effects of pain. Discography refers to injecting a certain dose of contrast agent into the nucleus pulposus cavity of the intervertebral disc with the assistance of X-ray, CT, or MRI and understanding the pathological characteristics of the intervertebral disc by observing the morphological changes of the nucleus pulposus and annulus fibrosus. As a diagnostic test, discs can be confirmed or ruled out as a source of back pain. Risks of discography are damage to the annulus fibrosus, disc infection, vascular injury, nerve root injury, hemorrhage, acute disc herniation. (1) Long-term side effects have been studied and lumbar discography seems to increase disc degeneration and herniation as detected on magnetic resonance imaging. (2) Discography procedures are associated with very low complication rates. Related-technique complications include radiculopathy, accelerated disc degeneration, endplates deformation, spondylodiscitis, transthecal puncture route may result in post-procedural headache, vertebral osteonecrosis and cauda equina syndrome (3)

References

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3. Estefan M, Estefan V. Intradiscal Electrothermal Therapy Stat Pearls. Last Update: June 26, 2023.