

# Claustrophobia linked to depression with back pain

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Image courtesy of Blausen Medical

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(HealthDay)—Claustrophobia is tied to higher rates of depression and psychological distress, but not disability, in back pain patients, according to a study published in the August issue of the *Journal of Spinal Disorders & Techniques*.

Hui-Ling Kerr, M.B.B.S., from Nottingham University Hospitals NHS trust in the United Kingdom, and colleagues conducted a case-control study using 20 females and 13 males all requiring magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan under sedation for claustrophobia (group 1) and an age- and sex-matched cohort that had MRI scan without sedation (group 2). Psychometric evaluations were conducted and all patients had standard conservative therapy for low back pain.

The researchers found that the mean Zung [Depression](#) Index was significantly higher in group 1 than in group 2 (59.5 versus 28.9), as was the mean Modified Somatic Perception Questionnaire score (13.3 versus 9.2). Group 1 also had a higher prevalence of [psychological distress](#) (75.8 versus 18.2 percent; P

"Claustrophobic patients with [back pain](#) showed higher levels of depression than nonclaustrophobic patients, with a higher rate of psychological distress," the authors write. "Claustrophobia requiring sedation for MRI scans may be a proxy for psychological distress in these patients and psychometric testing is advised during assessment to help with surgical decision making."

**More information:** [Full Text](#)

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