Standard criteria needed for spinal stenosis diagnosis

April 28 2013

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(HealthDay)—There is a need for a consensus on criteria to define and classify lumbar spinal stenosis, according to a review published in the April 15 issue of *Spine*.

Evelien I.T. de Schepper, M.D., from Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and colleagues conducted an updated comprehensive literature search for diagnostic studies on lumbar spinal stenosis, in which one or more diagnostic tests were evaluated with a reference standard and diagnostic accuracy was reported or could be calculated.

The researchers found that 22 additional articles in addition to the 24

included in the previous review (2004) met the inclusion criteria. In total there were 20 articles concerning imaging tests, 11 articles evaluating electrodiagnostic tests, and 15 articles evaluating clinical tests. There was variation in estimates of the diagnostic accuracy of the tests. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) was found to be the most promising imaging test for lumbar spinal stenosis. There was no superior accuracy for electrodiagnostic studies compared to MRI.

"There is a need for a consensus on criteria to define and classify lumbar spinal stenosis," the authors write. "At present, the most promising imaging test for lumbar spinal stenosis is MRI, avoiding myelography because of its invasiveness and lack of superior accuracy."

More information: Abstract
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