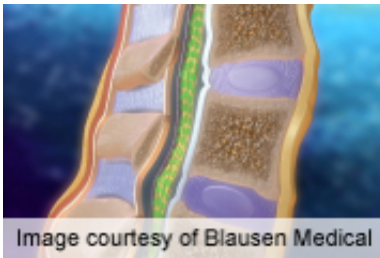


Decompression surgery linked to reduced risk of falls

July 22 2014



(HealthDay)—Decompression surgery in patients with lumbar spinal stenosis cuts their risk of falls, compared to similar patients utilizing nonsurgical interventions, according to a study published in the July 2 issue of *The Journal of Bone & Joint Surgery*.

Byung Ho Lee, M.D., from Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea, and colleagues assessed the effect of medical treatment and decompression [surgery](#) on the risk of patients with [lumbar spinal stenosis](#) falling. A surgery group (76 patients) and a nonoperative group (50 patients) were evaluated for risk of falling using four functional mobility tests: the Alternate-Step test, Six-Meter Walk test, Sit-to-Stand test, and timed "Up & Go" test.

The researchers found that the results of the Alternate-Step test significantly improved during the follow-up period in the surgery group

($P = 0.001$) and significantly worsened in the nonoperative group ($P = 0.001$). The surgery group also showed significant improvement for the Six-Meter Walk test one year postoperatively ($P = 0.042$) and for the timed "Up & Go" test at three months and one year ($P = 0.046$ and 0.000 , respectively). Both groups showed improvement in the Oswestry Disability Index and the EuroQoL-5D visual analog scale scores. Age, surgery, and the presence of an osteoporotic compression fracture significantly affected the test results related to the risk of falling (P

"Improved physical performance, including walking and balancing, after decompression lumbar [spinal surgery](#) reduces the future risk of falling," the authors write.

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