

MRI can visualize effects of traction on herniated discs

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(HealthDay)—Magnetic resonance imaging can be used to visualize the effects of continuous traction on herniated lumbar intervertebral discs and their surrounding structures, according to a study published in the June issue of *Radiology*.

Tae-Sub Chung, M.D., Ph.D., from the Yonsei University College of Medicine in Seoul, South Korea, and colleagues used real-time [magnetic resonance imaging](#) to examine the morphologic changes in herniated lumbar intervertebral discs and surrounding structures during lumbar traction. Forty-eight patients with lumbar disc herniation were treated with continuous lumbar traction. Real-time magnetic resonance imaging was performed before traction initiation and at 10-minute intervals during 30 minutes continuous traction of 30 kg.

The researchers observed changes in disc shape, disc reduction with opening in the intervertebral disc, reduction of [herniated disc](#) volume, separation of the disc and adjoining nerve root, and widening of the facet joint as a result of continuous traction on herniated [lumbar discs](#) and surrounding structures. There were increases in the mean lumbar vertebral column length (1.45 percent elongation after 30 minutes; P

"The results of this study demonstrated that the real-time effects of continuous traction on herniated lumbar intervertebral discs and their surrounding structures can be visualized by using [magnetic resonance imaging](#)," the authors write.

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