

# One third of people aged 40-59 have evidence of degenerative disc disease

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Researchers from Hebrew SeniorLife's Institute for Aging Research, and Boston Medical Center have reported that one-third of people 40-59 years have image-based evidence of moderate to severe degenerative disc disease and more than half had moderate to severe spinal osteoarthritis. Beyond that, the prevalence of disc height narrowing and joint osteoarthritis increased 2 to 4 fold in those aged 60-69 and 70-89 respectively. Furthermore, scientists observed that progression of these conditions occurred 40—70% more frequently in women than men.

To uncover these results, scientists used CT scans taken six years apart to evaluate the severity of disc disease and spinal [osteoarthritis](#) in 1200 cohort members of the Framingham Study—a collection of data from Framingham, MA residents and their offspring dating back to the 1940s. The results of this study were published recently in *The Spine Journal*.

Elizabeth Samelson, Ph.D., Associate Scientist at the Institute for Aging Research and author of this study said, "Spinal degenerative conditions, including disc height narrowing and joint osteoarthritis are common causes of pain, reduced function, and [health care costs](#) in older adults. Despite the clinical importance, little is known about the frequency and progression of spinal degenerative disease in the general population. Therefore, we conducted a study to describe the prevalence and progression in a population-based cohort."

**More information:** Mohamed Jarraya et al. A longitudinal study of disc height narrowing and facet joint osteoarthritis at the thoracic and

lumbar spine, evaluated by computed tomography: the Framingham Study, *The Spine Journal* (2018). [DOI: 10.1016/j.spinee.2018.04.010](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.spinee.2018.04.010)

Provided by Hebrew SeniorLife Institute for Aging Research

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