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Review supports fusion for disc-related chronic low back pain

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(HealthDay)—Clinical outcomes are positive for patients with chronic low back pain due to degenerative disc disease who undergo lumbar fusion, according to a review published in the April 1 issue of *Spine*.

Frank M. Phillips, M.D., from Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, and colleagues conducted a systematic literature review and identified 26 articles to analyze clinical outcomes following lumbar fusion for chronic low back pain due to degenerative disc disease. A total of 3,060 patients were included in the fusion cohorts.

The researchers found that there were weighted average improvements in the visual analogue scale for back pain (36.8/100), the Oswestry Disability Index (22.2), and in the Short-Form-36 Physical Component

Scale (12.5). Across studies, patient satisfaction averaged 71.1 percent. The reoperation rate averaged 12.5 percent overall and 9.2 percent at the index level, while radiographical fusion rates averaged 89.1 percent. There was no significant difference in any of the outcome measures in collective studies, based on level of evidence.

"The body of literature supports fusion surgery as a viable treatment option for reducing pain and improving function in patients with chronic LBP refractory to nonsurgical care when a diagnosis of disc degeneration can be made," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed financial ties and patents; the study was partially funded by NuVasive Inc.

More information: Abstract
Full Text (subscription or payment may be required)

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