

Common radiology findings in asymptomatic patients

Estimated percentages of findings in spinal imaging in asymptomatic patients

Imaging finding	AGE						
	20	30	40	50	60	70	80
Disc degeneration	37%	52%	68%	80%	88%	93%	96%
Disc signal loss	17%	33%	54%	73%	86%	94%	97%
Disc height loss	24%	34%	45%	56%	67%	76%	84%
Disc bulge	30%	40%	50%	60%	69%	77%	84%
Disc protrusion	29%	31%	33%	36%	38%	40%	43%
Annular fissure	19%	20%	22%	23%	25%	27%	29%
Facet degeneration	4%	9%	18%	32%	50%	69%	83%
Spondylolisthesis	3%	5%	8%	14%	23%	35%	50%

- Imaging evidence of degenerative spine disease is common in asymptomatic individuals and increases with age.
- Many imaging-based degenerative features are likely part of normal aging and not associated with pain and dysfunction.
- All imaging findings must be interpreted in the context of the patient's presentation and clinical assessment.

Brinjikji, W, Luetmer, PH, Comstock, B, Bresnahan, BW, Chen, LE, Deyo, RA, Halabi, S, Turner, JA, Avins, AL, James, K, Wald, JT, Kallmes, DF and Jarvik JG (2015), Systematic Literature Review of Imaging Features of Spinal Degeneration in Asymptomatic Populations, in *American Journal of Neuroradiology*, 36(4): 811-816.