

Spinal Imaging Asymptomatic Patients

Estimated Percentage of Degeneration in Spinal Imaging in Asymptomatic Patients

Imaging Finding	AGE						
	20	30	40	50	60	70	80
Disk degeneration	37%	52%	68%	80%	88%	93%	96%
Disk signal loss	17%	33%	54%	73%	86%	94%	97%
Disk height loss	24%	34%	45%	56%	67%	76%	84%
Disk bulge	30%	40%	50%	60%	69%	77%	84%
Disk 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 un-associated with pain. Prior studies have demonstrated degenerative findings on MR imaging in individuals with low back pain are not necessarily associated with the degree or the presence of low back pain
- All imaging findings must be interpreted in the context of the patient's clinical condition.