

Low Back Pain Impairment Score of Waddell and Main

Overview:

Waddell and Main developed a score for calculating impairment associated with low back pain. The authors are from the Western Infirmary in Glasgow Scotland.

Parameters:

- (1) major problem
- (2) time pattern
- (3) history of previous fracture
- (4) history of previous back surgery
- (5) root compression
- (6) lumbar flexion in cm using the technique described by Macrae and Wright or Moll and Wright
- (7) straight leg raising with distraction left leg
- (8) straight leg raising with distractaion right leg

Parameter	Finding	Points
major problem	none	0
	back pain	0
	back and referred pain	8
	root pain	-2
	spinal stenosis with neurogenic claudication	8
time pattern	acute	0
	recurring	4
	chronic	8
previous fracture	none	0
	transverse process	1
	wedge compression	2
	fracture dislocation	6
previous back surgery	none	0

	1	3
	> 1	6
root compression	none	0
	doubtful	1
	definite	2
lumbar flexion	distance in cm	(- 2) * cms
straight leg raising	angle for left leg	(-1) * (degrees) / 10
	angle for right leg	(-1) * (degrees) / 10

approximate total body impairment =

= 28 + SUM(parameters)

Impression:

- minimum score: around 0
- maximum score: around 58
- The higher the score the greater the degree of impairment.

References:

Macrae IF Wright V. Measurement of back movement. Ann Rheum Dis. 1969; 28: 584-589.

Moll JH Wright V. Normal range of spinal mobility. Ann Rheum Dis. 1971; 30: 381-386.

Waddell G Main CJ. Assessment of severity in low-back disorders. Spine. 1984; 9: 204-208 (Table 3 page 205).

Waddell G. Clinical assessment of lumbar impairment. Clin Orthopaedics and Related Research. 1987; 221: 110-120 (Table 2 page 114).