

Learning Objectives

MedBridge

The Aging Spine

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Course Objectives:

- Know the incidence and prevalence of spinal pain in the elderly.
- Identify the advantages and disadvantages of spinal imaging.
- List the differential diagnoses of spinal pain in an elderly population.
- Determine if physical therapy is appropriate for your elderly patient.
- Implement evidence-based interventions for your elderly patients with spinal pain.
- Understand the prognosis for spinal pain with physical therapy interventions.

Chapter 1: The Aging Spine

This chapter is an overview of normal aging versus pathology of the spine in the elderly. A discussion of the incidence and prevalence of spinal pain is included. Regardless of setting, a physical therapist will interact with patients that have spinal pain.

Chapter 2: Pathophysiology of the Spine

This chapter will cover the pathophysiology of spinal pain in the elderly. The impairments associated with each condition will be discussed. Even with imaging and a thorough evaluation, there may not be a definitive pathoanatomical diagnosis. Interventions may be aimed at improving impairments as opposed to treating a specific diagnosis.

Chapter 3: Evidence-Based Examination and Evaluation

This chapter discusses the examination and evaluation of spinal pain in an elderly patient. Emphasis is placed on evidence-based techniques for differential diagnosis of spinal pain. This is important to determine appropriateness of physical therapy, as well as differential diagnosis.

Chapter 4: Evidence-Based Interventions

This chapter will discuss physical therapy interventions that have been shown in the literature to be beneficial for spinal pain in the elderly. As a clinician it is important to implement safe and effective interventions for this population.

Chapter 5: Prognosis

This chapter discusses the prognosis of spinal pain in the elderly with regards to specific diagnoses as well as non-specific spinal pain.