

BUTTERFLY VERTEBRA TREATED POST SURGICAL DISC REMOVAL

A 27-year-old white male is seen for the chief complaint of 3 months of low back pain radiating into the left anterior thigh and leg. No motor weakness is seen. The deep tendon reflexes of the lower extremity are plus 2 globally. Straight leg raise sign is negative.

History shows that in 1998 an orthopedic surgeon removed the L4-L5 disc because this man had low back pain. Note he had no leg pain at the time, and yet the surgeon removed the L4-L5 disc. This did not help the patient, and now he is having low back and left anterior thigh femoral pain. One questions the wisdom of the surgery.

MRI shows a butterfly vertebrae at the L4 level. See figure below.



Flexion distraction decompression adjusting was used on this patient. It was felt that any type of forceful high velocity thrust adjusting was contraindicated. The application of flexion distraction decompression manipulation from the L1 through L3 levels resulted in relief of the low back and femoral nerve pain to a VAS of 3 in the low back and 2 in the leg from a VAS of 8 after 9 visits.

At that time, he felt that the quality of his life was compatible with his desires. He did

not see us for nine weeks, and returned on January 07, 2007, with a VAS of 4 for the low back and a 2 in the left femoral nerve. The same treatment is instituted. We have told him he must maintain a strong exercise program and be treated at 2-4 week intervals until we see that he maintains the relief that we were able to attain.

Certainly this is a case in which you cannot cure the back pain, but we can control it. He was taught proper ergonomics as he is a crane operator. He is performing exercises 1-5 on the Cox® Exercise form. He does apply ice on the low back when it bothers him.

This is a good case example of a condition which we control through proper manipulation and ergonomics. No cure is possible, but we do make this patient's life compatible with his desires. It seems that removal of the L4-5 disc for relief of back pain was not the best first line treatment in this case.

Sincerely yours,

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