

# Provocative discography

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This investigation involves the placement of a 24-gauge needle into the centre of the intervertebral disc in a conscious patient. Radio-opaque contrast agent (1–3.5 mL) is then injected into the disc. The contrast pattern will allow the discrimination of different degrees of disc degeneration; cotton ball or lobular would be considered normal whereas irregular, fissured or ruptured would be considered degenerate ( Figure 37.1 patient is asked if they are experiencing their 'usual type of back pain'. To diagnose discogenic low back pain one must document evidence of disc degeneration and concordant pain during the injection. Treatment options may include spinal fusion or disc replacement. Provocative discography

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