

Spinal stenosis

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Spinal stenosis may be defined as any type of narrowing of the spinal canal, nerve root canal or intervertebral foramen. The resultant nerve root compression leads to nerve root - ischaemia, presenting with back, buttock or leg pain provoked by exercise. Spinal stenosis may be congenital, as is the case - in achondroplasia, or acquired, as is the case for degenerative types (commonly presenting between 50 and 70 years of age). The narrowing is caused by facet joint hypertrophy , disc bulg - ing and ligamentum flavum thickening. Symptoms of spinal claudication can be distinguished from vascular claudication because they are frequently associated with neurological symptoms, are often worse in e xtension and pedal pulses are present on clinical examination. Symptoms progress in approximately 20–33% of patients who receive no treatment. The condition may be treated successfully by surgi - cal decompression alone with preservation of the facet joints. Summary box 37.5 Spinal stenosis /uni25CF /uni25CF /uni25CF /uni25CF /uni25CF

Extremely common condition in the 50- to 70-year age group Classic symptoms: back, buttock, thigh and calf pain Provoked by walking and extended posture Relieved by /f_ l exed posture Symptoms progress in up to one-third of untreated patients

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