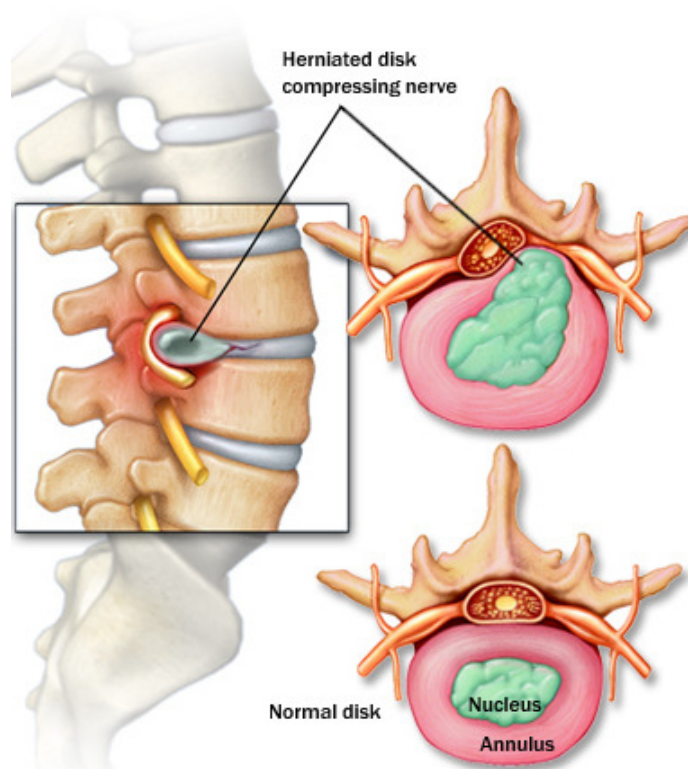


# TOPIC OF THE MONTH

## CERVICAL AND LUMBAR DISC HERNIATIONS

**Disc herniation** is a rupture of fibrocartilagenous material (annulus fibrosus) that surrounds the intervertebral disc. This rupture involves the release of the disc's centre portion containing a gelatinous substance called the nucleus pulposus. Pressure from the vertebrae above and below may cause the nucleus pulposus to be forced outward, placing pressure on a spinal nerve and causing considerable pain and damage to the nerve. This condition most frequently occurs in the lumbar and cervical regions and is also commonly called herniated nucleus pulposus, prolapsed disc, ruptured intervertebral disc, or slipped disc.



In a very recent study from the *Journal of Manual and Physiological Therapeutics*, researchers from Switzerland compared the effects of specific chiropractic adjustments and epidural nerve root injections. The study included 102 patients with symptomatic, MRI-confirmed lumbar disc herniation who were treated with either Chiropractic or epidural injections.

After one month of treatment, both groups experienced significant improvements. However, while none of the Chiropractic patients received surgery, three of the epidural nerve root injection patients eventually opted for an operation and Chiropractic care was less expensive than the medical option (Peterson et al, 2013).

This study suggests that patients can experience substantial relief from chiropractic care without worrying about the side effects of steroids or drugs. It may even save them money; research suggests that chiropractic patients have lower annual medical costs compared to patients under traditional care.

#### References:

Peterson, CK, et al. Symptomatic Magnetic Resonance Imaging-confirmed lumbar disc herniation patients: a comparative effectiveness prospective observational study of 2 age- and sex-matched cohorts treated with high-velocity, low-amplitude spinal manipulative therapy or imaging-guided lumbar nerve root injections. *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* 2013; doi: 10.1016/j.jmpt.2013.04.005.

**This is a condition that we commonly see at the clinic and treat with success. If you know anyone that suffers with it or you would like more information, please ask Dr Alberto or Dr Antoni.**