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A Nonsurgical Approach for Patients With Lumbar Spinal Stenosis

The purpose of this case report is to describe a physical therapy approach to the evaluation, treatment, and outcome assessment of two patients diagnosed with lumbar spinal stenosis. Evaluation consisted of assessment of neurological status, spinal range of motion, and lower-extremity muscle force production and flexibility; administration of the Modified Oswestry Low Back Pain Questionnaire and the Roland-Morris Disability Questionnaire; assessment of pain using a visual analog scale; and performance of a two-stage treadmill test. The treatment program was designed to treat the impairments, and harness-supported treadmill ambulation (unloading) was used to address the limitation in ambulation identified by the treadmill test. Outcome assessment included measuring changes in the status of the impairments and assessing responses to the disability questionnaires and performance of the two-stage treadmill test. Improvements were noted on all outcome measures for both patients after 6 weeks of physical therapy and at the 4-week follow-up examination. Larger case series and randomized trials with long-term follow-ups are recommended. [Fritz JM, Erhard RE, Vignovic M. A nonsurgical treatment approach for patients with lumbar spinal stenosis. *Phys Ther.* 1997;77:962-973.]

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