

# INTERDISCIPLINARY TREATMENT OF CHRONIC LOW BACK PAIN DUE TO LUMBAR DISC EXTRUSION WITH RADIOFREQUENCY ABLATION OF THE L5/S1 DISC

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## Background

Chronic low back pain is one of the leading causes of disability. Radiofrequency ablation and neuromodulation are modern treatment techniques that have increasing role in the treatment of chronic pain.

## Case report

A 48 year-old female patient came to the physical and rehabilitation medicine specialist due to chronic low back pain irradiating alongside right leg. On the visual analogue scale (VAS) she rates the pain intensity at 8/10, describes cramping pain in the lower leg that wakes her up from sleep with no neurological deficit. Multimodal analgesia principle was recommended with naproxen and combination of tramadol/paracetamol. She was provided with lumbosacral orthosis. Since the analgesic effect was mild, methylprednisolone was introduced according to a 10 days de-escalation protocol. X-ray imaging of the lumbar spine showed degenerative changes. Magnetic resonance imaging was performed and revealed extrusion of the L5/S1 disc with 15mm caudal migration and compression of the S1 root. Since the neurosurgeon recommended surgical treatment and the patient was unwilling to it, it was decided to try conservative treatment. Two cycles of physical rehabilitation were performed that consisted of moderate medical exercises in the form of core muscle strengthening and manual techniques in form of the Maitland principle. Physical therapy procedures were applied; interferential current, low-level laser therapy and therapeutic ultrasound. After therapy pain was significantly reduced; VAS 4/10. Patient was examined by anesthesiologist and minimally invasive treatment procedure was recommended in form of radiofrequency ablation (RF) of the disc. After the procedure pain was minimal. After a month, an additional cycle of rehabilitation treatment was performed. Three months after the procedure patient does not feel pain and has returned to moderate sports activities.

## Conclusion

Through interdisciplinary rehabilitation treatment with a minimally invasive RF disc ablation, patient's quality of life was restored and she returned to moderate sports activities without pain.

**Keywords:** chronic, pain, radiofrequency, rehabilitation