The effect of low back pain on the daily activities of patients with lumbar disc herniation - A Turkish military hospital experience

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Aim: This study was performed to assess the disability on daily living activities, which was developed secondary to low back pain, in patients with lumbar disc herniation and treated either conservatively or surgically.

Materials and Methods: The study was performed between November 2008 and June 2009. Visual Analogue Score (VAS) was used to measure the intensity of pain and Oswestry Disability Index (ODI) was used to assess the disability of the patients on daily living activities. Of the 112 patients, 55 were female and 57 were male. The mean age was 39.68 years for conservative treatment group and 46.46 years for surgical treatment group. In the pre-treatment period, the patients who were selected for surgical treatment had higher VAS score and ODI than the patients who were selected for conservative treatment. The disability areas which were reported in the pre-treatment period were: walking, sleeping, standing and travelling for surgical treatment group, self-care, sitting, social life areas for conservative treatment group. When the ODI and VAS score of the patients were statistically compared at the 3rd month of post-treatment period; the scores were significantly low in the surgical treatment group. The disability areas, which were reported at the 3rd month of post-treatment period, were; weight-lifting, self-care and walking for the surgical treatment group and social life, sleeping, sitting, standing for the conservative treatment group.

Results: By this study, it was found that the patients with low back pain experienced physical disabilities due to pain. Their daily living activities were affected by these disabilities and the intensity of pain affected the level of disability.

Conclusion: The movements of the lower extremities may be affected by pain in patients with LDH, and changes have occurred in physical functions and roles due to this disability. The findings of this study show that patients experience disability in physical functions due to pain and that daily living activities are affected by these disabilities.

Recommendations: The knowledge of the disability areas caused by low back pain plays an important role on the determination of nursing care and content of the education which will be offered to the patients. The use of scale on the patient’s care is important to form a common language in nursing and to obtain evidence-based data related to the patients.

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