

Lumbar Decompression or Laminectomy

A common operation for taking pressure off the lumbar and sacral nerve roots, by trimming arthritic joints and removing arthritic ligaments

The narrowing of the space is referred to as stenosis, and this may be central or lateral (to the side)

Neurogenic claudication

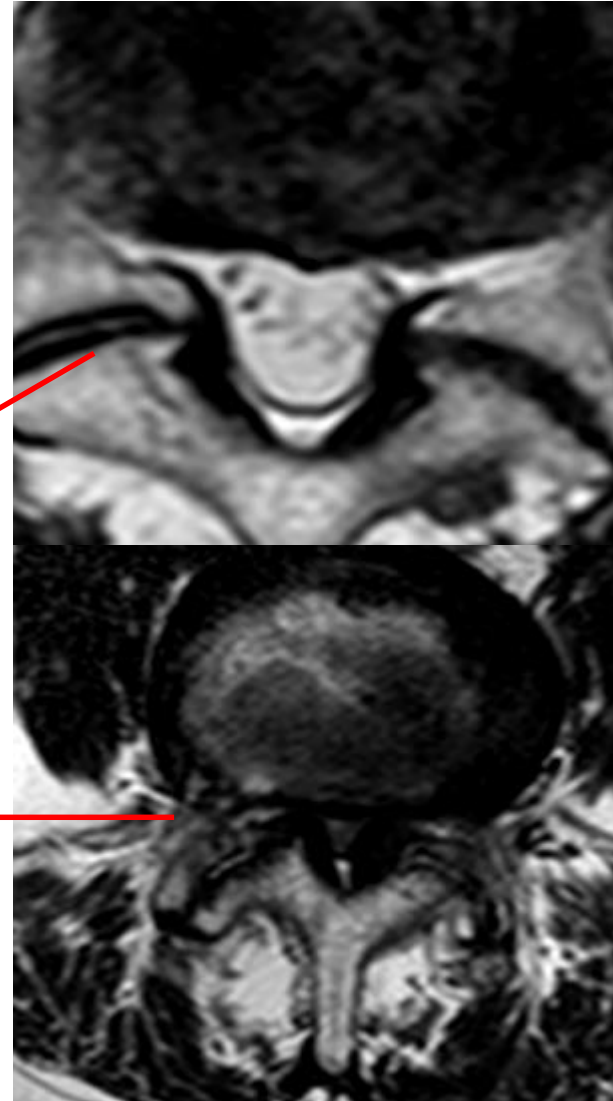
- The typical clinical syndrome is characterized by:
 - Leg symptoms after walking
 - Symptoms have a reversible nature
 - Ease with sitting, or bending forwards
 - Symptoms may be tingling/ pain/ cramps/ tightness/ ache
 - May be associated with back pain
 - If severe – limit standing too
- Usually normal straight leg raise, missing reflexes
- Important to assess foot pulses – circulation issues can mimic these features

Canal stenosis

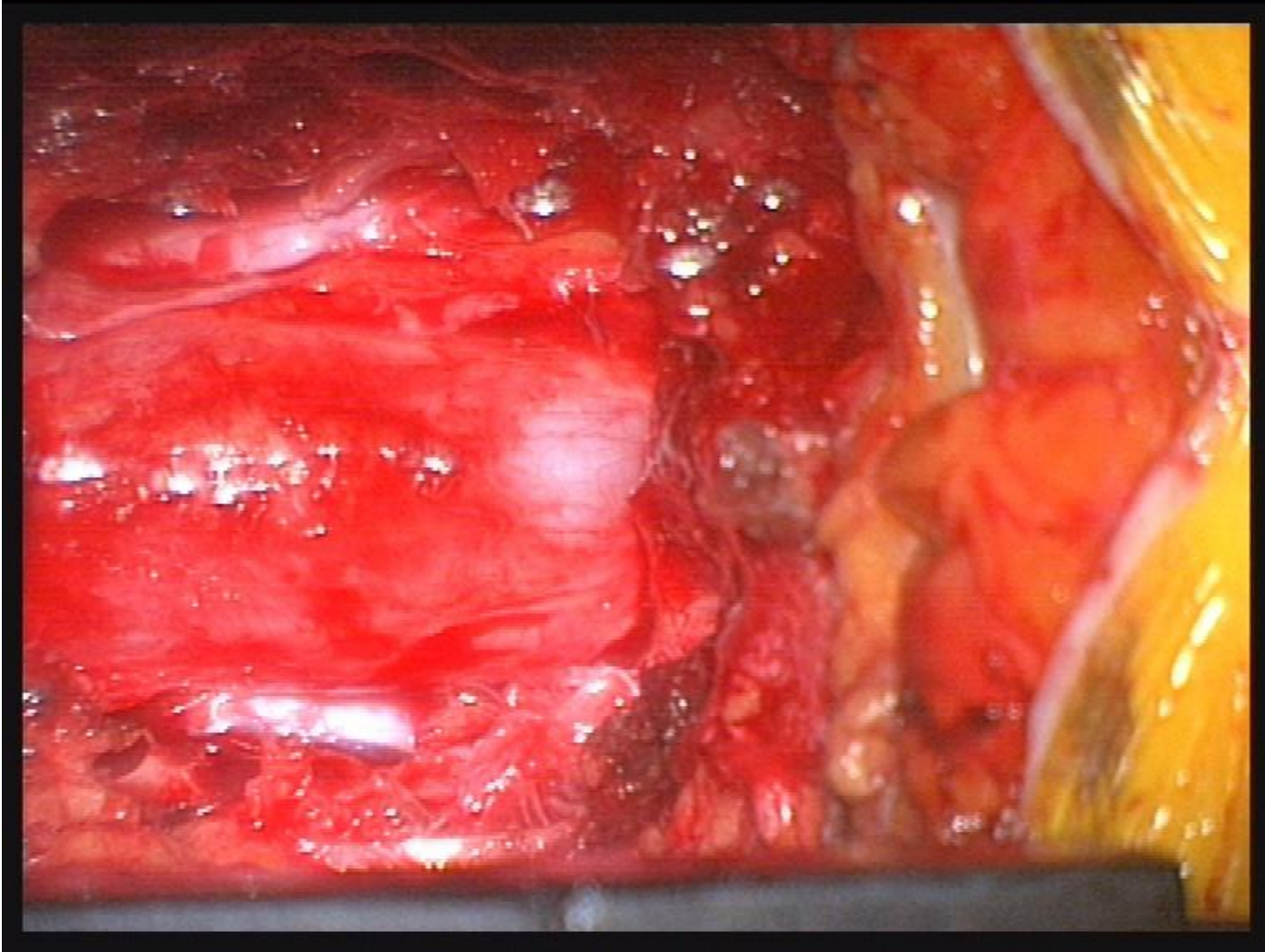
- Central stenosis is usually a condition affecting older patients – 70s 80s
- Symptoms tend to affect both legs
- Posture deteriorates – as bending forwards offers some respite from symptoms

Severe central canal stenosis

arthritic ligament and slip contribute to nerve compression

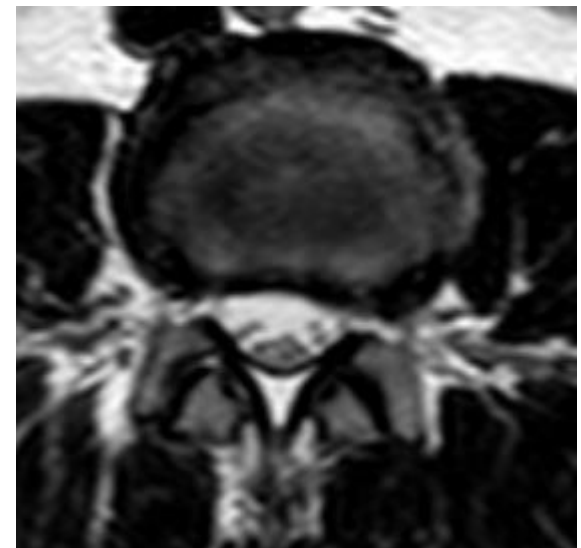


Operative view after laminectomy
– thecal sac is decompressed



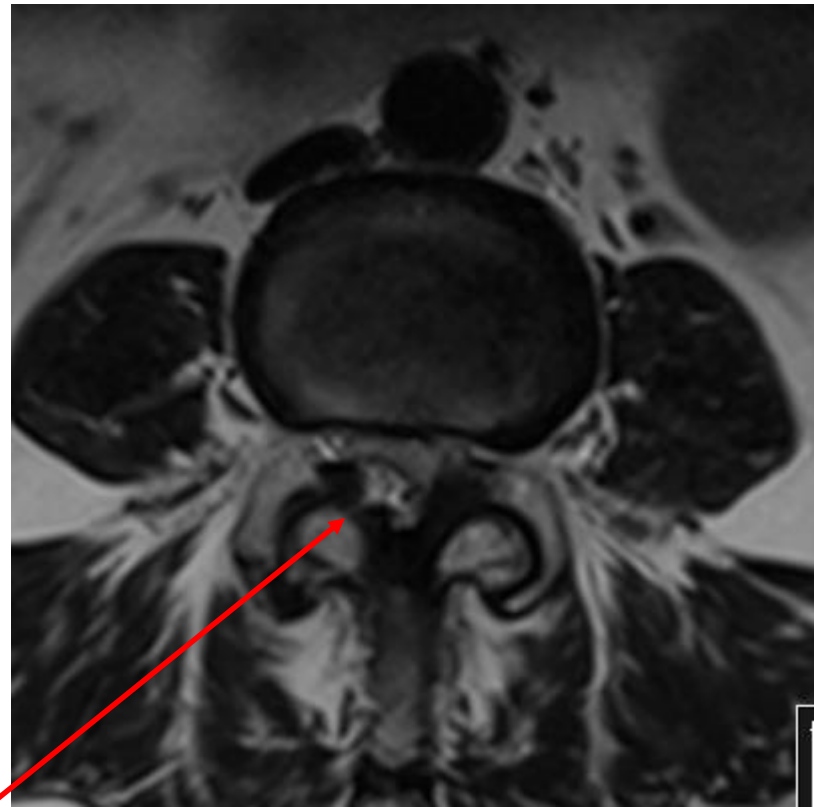
Lateral recess stenosis

- Symptoms of radiating pain down the leg- worse when walking (or standing in severe cases)
- Compression may be due to arthritic changes in the disc, facet joint or the ligamentum flavum
- The exact operation offered is determined by the number of levels, degree of degenerate change in the facet joints, and patient size
- The aim is to preserve structural integrity of the spine



MRI of lumbar synovial cyst

A very painful condition, with good results from surgery



Post-operative recovery

- Patients are normally mobile on the day of surgery
- Discharge normally after an overnight stay following assessment by the physiotherapists
- No lifting in the first few weeks
- Drive when safely able to perform an emergency stop – 3-4 weeks
- Progressively increase walking
- Rapidly reduce medications after the first 2 weeks

Physiotherapy

- Very important
- Stage 1: Restoration of good posture
- Stage 2: Restoration of sensible range of motion
- Stage 3: Core strengthening
- Stage 4: Maintenance of exercise program and weight reduction

- Degenerative lumbar canal stenosis generally affects older people – so there is often arthritic changes affecting the knees and hips too