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## Movement disorders after intervertebral disc surgery: coincidence or causal relationship?

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### Abstract

It is well known that brain injury or central traumatic lesions may result in the subsequent appearance of movement disorders such as dystonia or tremor. The concept that peripheral lesions to neural structures may be involved in the pathogenesis of movement disorders has been discussed controversially but has gained more widespread acceptance only recently. Here, we report on 6 patients who developed movement disorders after spinal disc surgery. The movement disorders became manifest with a delay of 1 day to 12 months after surgery. Of the six patients, 4 underwent cervical disc surgery, and 2 patients were operated on for lumbar disc herniation; 2 patients presented with paroxysmal kinesigenic segmental dystonia, 1 patient with focal dystonia, 2 with unilateral tremor, and 1 with bilateral tremor. The appearance of the movement disorder was associated with persistent dermatomal or segmental pain. In all patients, the anatomic distribution of the movement disorder was related to the nerve root or spinal segment of the corresponding disc level and the manifestation was in close temporal relation to the surgery. We conclude that spinal disc surgery may be another, thus far neglected, cause for movement disorders. The postoperative pain syndrome in all patients should be considered as an important factor of pathogenesis. Overall, movement disorders associated with disc surgery appear to be rare, yet they may cause significant discomfort to the affected individual.

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