



## ASSESSING AN UNDERGRADUATE LOW BACK PAIN TEACHING PROGRAMME: MEDICAL STUDENT UNDERSTANDING OF DEYO'S LOW BACK PAIN MYTHS

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## INTRODUCTION

- Low back pain (LBP) is defined as pain or discomfort below the costal margin and above the gluteal folds.
- LBP is one of the leading causes of disability worldwide, with lifetime prevalence estimates surpassing 50%.
- LBP recognised as one of the most costly conditions in the UK.



DEYO'S "7 MYTHS OF BACK PAIN"  
→ ADDRESS THE MOST COMMONLY HELD INCORRECT BELIEFS RELATED TO LBP.

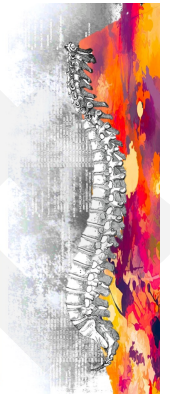
## METHODS

### STUDY DESIGN

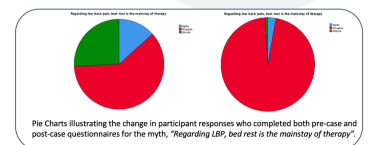
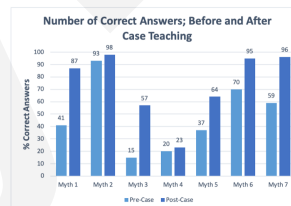
"Pre-post" study: The intervention we were assessing was a LBP case.  
Second year medical students at Cardiff University asked to complete a pre and post-case questionnaire.  
The teaching module contained no explicit reference to Deyo's 'Myths of Back Pain'.  
Survey consisted of 12 statements, with participants asked to answer with agree/disagree/unsure.

### OUTCOME ASSESSMENT

206 surveys gathered in total, with 109 students completing both pre and post-case surveys.  
Microsoft Excel used to collate a database and analysis carried out using SPSS v. 26.



## RESULTS



## OBJECTIVES

- Conduct a brief literature review on layman understanding of back pain vs medical professionals/students
- Identifying issues within the undergraduate curriculum surrounding low back pain teaching
- Design a questionnaire to be distributed throughout the years to allow gathering of data
- Analyse and collate data into a clear scientific article format; appropriate for publication
- Produce a scientific poster summarising outcomes regarding medical student education on low back pain and changes in understanding

### Deyo's LBP Myths.

*Deyo R.L. Low-back pain. Sci Am. 1996; p. 48-51.*

- If you have a slipped disc (also known as a herniated or ruptured disc), you must have surgery.
- Radiographs and newer imaging tests (computed tomography [CT] and magnetic resonance imaging [MRI] scans) can always identify the cause of the pain.
- If your back hurts, you should take it easy until the pain goes away.
- Most back pain is caused by injuries or heavy lifting.
- Back pain is usually disabling.
- Everyone with back pain should have a spine radiograph.
- Bed rest is the mainstay of therapy.

## RESULTS

### DEMOGRAPHICS

- Mean participant age 20, range (19-26)
- 69% Female, 31% Male
- 109 students completed both pre- and post-case surveys, with 63% reporting previous history of LBP

### MYTH IDENTIFICATION

- 5/7 myths saw a significant increase in correct answers given – eluding to the success of the 2-week teaching programme



Significant changes seen in 2 statements;

- "If you have a slipped disc, you must have surgery"
- "If your back hurts, you should take it easy until the pain goes away"

The least change in correct identification seen with the statement;

- "Most back pain is caused by injuries or heavy lifting"

## DISCUSSION

### LITERATURE

Validation of a study carried out at the NUI Galway  
→ misconceptions 'prevalent' amongst medical students.

Literature showed misconceptions consistently exist globally  
→ both within general public and medical profession.

### LIMITATIONS

No long-term follow-up of students to assess delayed recall

Study group was narrow (second year students only)

Prior 'experience' of LBP not taken into account which may have skewed responses

### FUTURE PLAN

Long term follow up to be carried out

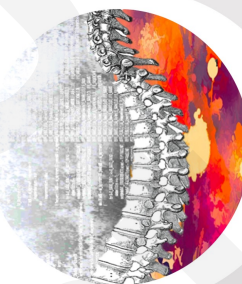
Study group to be expanded to all year groups

Future studies will look at explicit teaching of Deyo's Myths within the 2-week case

Data gathered and re-audited; is the teaching making a difference?

## CONCLUSION

- Widespread misconceptions exist regarding the development, management and understanding of LBP.
- Medical students responded well to a LBP-specific case, demonstrating greater identification of the '7 Myths'.
- Important to continue dispelling these myths through proper education within medical schools around the UK.
- A well informed Healthcare force leads to a more aware public.



## THANK YOU

## Conflict of Interest: NONE

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