The Wonderful World of back Pain

Andrew Dubin, MD, MS
Associate prof. PM&R, Dept. of PM&R
The wonderful world of back pain.

• Etiology of back pain.
• In general multifactorial
• Activities, physical condition, associated medical / surgical conditions, luck of the draw.
Want to focus on things you have control over.

- Body habitus - body wgt.
- Aerobic conditioning, muscular strength and flexibility
- General health - smoking - bad for the health of discs.
Common pain complaints

- Para midline low back pain.
- Feel stiff, tight, sudden moves cause pain.
- No radiating pain. No true radicular pain (what is radicular pain?)
- DDX of mid line pain - posterior element,
- muscular, possibly discogenic
What makes pain worse, better

- Muscular pain worse with sitting for prolonged periods of time. Movie goers sign
- Posterior element pain - better with sitting than standing.
- Discogenic - worse with sitting than standing
How to treat muscular pain

- Stop smoking
- Lose weight
- Increase flexibility of hip flexors
- Strengthen core (What is core?)
- How to get a strong core. Exercise
The good the bad and the ugly.

- Exercise
- Push ups. Pull ups, Hamstring stretch the right way.
- Strengthen the obliques (What are obliques?)
- Don’t be afraid to move.
The Bad

• Sit ups - bad. Curl ups good.
• Curl ups while doing pull ups great.
• Extension exercises - can be good can be bad
• Bad with posterior element of spondylolisthesis. Good with kyphosis, or discogenic issues.
The Ugly

- Failure to move.
- Failure to committing to taking an active role in managing your pain.
Take home point

• You control your pain. It does not control you or define who you are.