

**Nonspecific low back pain** (NSLBP) is a term used to describe **low back pain** of unknown origin with no identifiable generators. Over a decade ago, it was reported to account for about 85% of all cases of low back pain, although there is some doubt about the frequency. The purpose of a study of Yamashita et al., was to determine the frequency of NSLBP in **adolescent athletes** diagnosed by general orthopedic surgeons and by spine surgeons.

A total of 69 adolescent athletes consulted our sports spine clinic to seek a second opinion for low back pain. Data on age, sex, type of sport played, the previous diagnosis made by general orthopedic surgeons, and the final diagnosis made by spine surgeons were collected retrospectively from medical records.

The frequency of NSLBP diagnosed by general orthopedic surgeons was 18.9% and decreased to 1.4% after careful imaging and functional nerve block examination by spine surgeons. The final diagnoses made by spine surgeons for those patients previously diagnosed as having NSLBP by general orthopedic surgeons were as follows: early-stage **lumbar spondylolysis**, **discogenic low back pain**, **facet joint arthritis**, **lumbar disc herniation**, and **lumbar apophyseal ring fracture**.

In adolescent athletes, the rate of NSLBP diagnosed by general orthopedic surgeons decreased markedly when the diagnosis was made by spine surgeons. A thorough medical interview, careful physical examination, appropriate diagnostic imaging, and selective nerve block examination can effectively identify the cause of low back pain <sup>1)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup>

Yamashita K, Sakai T, Takata Y, Tezuka F, Manabe H, Morimoto M, Kinoshita Y, Yonezu H, Chikawa T, Mase Y, Sairyo K. Low Back Pain in Adolescent Athletes: Comparison of Diagnoses Made by General Orthopedic Surgeons and Spine Surgeons. Int J Spine Surg. 2019 Apr 30;13(2):178-185. doi: 10.14444/6024. eCollection 2019 Apr. PubMed PMID: 31131218; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC6510183.

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