

Spinal epidural abscess epidemiology

The incidence of [spinal epidural abscess](#) (SEA) has doubled in the past decade, owing to an aging population and to increased use of [spinal instrumentation](#) and vascular access.

Incidence: 0.2–1.2 per 10,000 hospital [admissions](#) annually ¹⁾. possibly on the rise ²⁾ Average age: 57.5 ± 16.6 years ³⁾. [Thoracic](#) level is the most common site (≈ 50%), followed by [lumbar](#) (35%) then [cervical](#) 82% were posterior to the cord, and 18% anterior in one series ⁴⁾. SEA may span from 1 to 13 levels ⁵⁾.

Spinal epidural abscess (SEA) is often associated with [vertebral osteomyelitis](#) (in one series of 40 cases, osteomyelitis occurred in all cases of anterior SEA, in 85% of circumferential SEA, and no cases of posterior SEA) and intervertebral [discitis](#).

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³⁾

Danner RL, Hartman BJ. Update of Spinal Epidural Abscess: 35 Cases and Review of the Literature. Rev Infect Dis. 1987; 9:265–274

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