

Spinal epidural abscess pathophysiology

Although some cord symptoms may be due to mechanical compression (including that due to vertebral body collapse), this is not always found.

A vascular mechanism has also been postulated, and various combinations of arterial and venous pathology have been described ¹⁾ (one autopsy series showed little arterial compromise, but did show venous compression and thrombosis, thrombophlebitis of epidural veins, and venous infarction and edema of the spinal cord ²⁾). Occasionally, there may be infection of the spinal cord itself, possibly by extension through the meninges.

¹⁾

Baker AS, Ojemann RG, Swartz MN, et al. Spinal Epidural Abscess. N Engl J Med. 1975; 293:463– 468

²⁾

Russell NA, Vaughan R, Morley TP. Spinal Epidural Infection. Can J Neurol Sci. 1979; 6:325–328

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