

# Spinal infection risk factors

Risk factors for developing spinal infection include conditions that compromise the immune system, such as:

Advanced age

Intravenous drug use

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection

Long-term systemic usage of steroids

Diabetes mellitus

Organ transplantation

Malnutrition

Cancer

Surgical risk factors include surgeries of long duration, high blood loss, implantation of instrumentation and multiple, or revision, surgeries at the same site. Infections occur in 1-4% of surgical cases, despite numerous preventative measures that are followed.

Spinal infections in People who inject drugs are an underreported serious medical complication of injecting drug use. Though mortality is low, there is significant morbidity with prolonged admissions, large antimicrobial requirements and surgical interventions generating a substantial cost to the health system <sup>1)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup>

Ananda RA, Attwood LO, Lancaster R, Jacka D, Jhoomun T, Danks A, Woolley I. The Clinical and Financial Burden of Spinal Infections in People who Inject Drugs. Intern Med J. 2021 May 24. doi: 10.1111/imj.15397. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34028966.

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Last update: **2024/06/07 02:50**

