

Physiotherapy movement based classification approaches to low back pain

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Several classification schemes, each with its own philosophy and categorizing method, subgroup low back pain (LBP) patients with the intent to guide treatment. Physiotherapy derived schemes usually have a movement impairment focus, but the extent to which other biological, psychological, and social factors of pain are encompassed requires exploration. Furthermore, within the prevailing 'biological' domain, the overlap of subgrouping strategies within the orthopaedic examination remains unexplored. The aim of this presentation is "to review and clarify the theoretical basis and content of physical movement classification schemes, determine their relative reliability and similarities/differences, and to consider the extent of incorporation of the bio-psycho-social framework within the schemes".

There are considerable diversity exists between schemes in how movement informs subgrouping and in the consideration of broader neurosensory, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of LBP. Despite differences in assessment philosophy, a common element lies in their objective to identify a movement pattern related to a pain reduction strategy. Two dominant movement paradigms emerge: (i) loading strategies aimed at eliciting a phenomenon of centralisation of symptoms; and (ii) modified movement strategies targeted towards documenting the movement impairments associated with the pain state.