

PHYSIO4ALL

revitalise – bounce – be healthy

Stage 2: Facet Joint Arthropathy “Wear & Tear”

What is Facet Joint Arthropathy (FJA)?

The term “arthropathy” covers the wide range of this disorder, from fleeting joint sprain of the capsular ligaments right through to true arthritis facet joints.

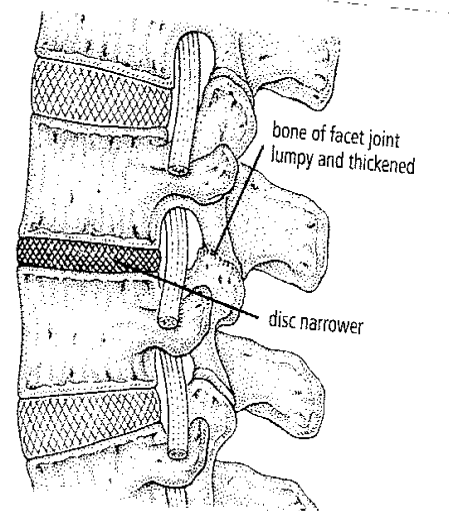
Causes of FJA

1- Disc degeneration

- Disc Stiffening ⇒ facet capsules tighten
- Disc Narrowing ⇒ facet joint surfaces override

2- Abnormal posture

- A sway back causes the lower facets to jam as the angle of the sacrum tips more than its average of 50°
- Weak tummy muscles jam the facets
- A shorter leg can cause arthritis of the facets
- Scoliosis



Symptoms

Acute phase

The exiting nerve swims in a pool of toxins as the facet joint capsule is inflamed. Facets joint are normally very rich in nerve and blood supply thus become highly sensitive in the presence of an inflammatory process.

- Stabbing pain to one side of the spine
- Waves of pain down your leg
- Your back feels hard and sore with muscle spasm on one side
- The pain is often associated with intense pins and needles and a burning sensation which floods downwards as your leg takes weight (**facet joint sciatica**)

Chronic phase

The soft tissues around the joint stiffen and the joint capsule becomes adaptively shortened as a sequel of disc thinning and overriding of facet surfaces.

- Low grade tenderness and chronically stiffened muscles in your back
- Pain in the buttock and thigh comes and goes with activities which increase the pressure on the facets (e.g. slumped sitting or prolonged bending activities like gardening)
- The above symptoms may vary day to day, sometimes from hour to hour and almost from one position to the next.

*Acknowledgement to Sarah Keys (pictures & content)

Shop No. P16, NorthPoint, 100 Miller St. North Sydney. NSW – 2060

T – (02) 99222212 F – (02) 99225577 W: www.physio4all.com.au

E: info@physio4all.com.au

ABN: 77 548 297 578