

# Contemporary Assessment and Management of spine-related leg pain

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## Course description

Spine-related leg pain is commonly encountered by musculoskeletal therapists. This presentation entails many different diagnoses including lumbar radiculopathy, lumbar radicular pain or spinal canal stenosis. In addition to differing underlying diagnoses, spine-related leg pain also shows mechanistic heterogeneity. For instance, some patients may present with somatic referred pain whereas others may experience neuropathic pain or heightened nerve mechanosensitivity. As such, spine-related leg pain represents a heterogeneous group of people, who have varying prognoses and may need distinct management approaches. However, untangling the heterogeneity of spine-related leg pain often remains challenging in a clinical setting, thus causing uncertainty regarding optimal management strategies. This course aims to provide a detailed insight the contemporary assessment and management of spine related leg pain, underpinned by recent scientific advances and neurobiological concepts.

In the first part of the course, participants will learn about the latest evidence on differentiation of spine-related leg pain. This will include both a diagnosis-based approach as well as a mechanism-based framework. The latter will enable participants to differentiate distinct types of pain including different varieties of nerve pain to help guide management. Participants will practice advanced assessment methods including neurological examination and screening for red flags (such as cord compression). Importantly participants will learn how to interpret their findings in the context of spine-related leg pain and in individual patient presentations.

The second part of the course concerns the management for people with spine-related leg pain. This part will include an update on the scientific evidence for the efficacy and benefit (or lack thereof) of physiotherapeutic interventions. We will also discuss pharmacological options as well as the decision on when surgical intervention or onwards referral is indicated.

Upon completion of the course, participants will have a deep understanding of the heterogeneity of spine-related leg pain. They will understand the distinction and integration of a diagnosis and mechanism-based approach and be aware of common red flags. They will feel confident to differentiate the dominant mechanisms in individual patients using contemporary assessments including correct interpretation of findings. Participants will also be competent in designing a targeted and contemporary intervention for different subgroups of patients, and be aware of when to refer on for further investigations or invasive interventions.

#### Course Objectives:

- To enable the participants to understand the differing diagnoses underlying spine-related leg pain and to incorporate this knowledge into their reasoning framework
- To be able to apply the clinical framework for subgrouping different types of spinally referred leg pain in their clinical setting
- To be familiar with the practical performance and interpretation of a contemporary assessment in the context of spine-related leg pain
- To be competent in designing a targeted intervention for patients with spine-related leg pain

#### Requirements:

- 1 plinth per 2 participants
- Projector and flip chart
- Reflex hammers, cotton wool and pin pricks