

Cervical disc herniation

and how they can be managed

Webinar for GPs, 17 April 2024



Dr Ralph Stanford

ORTHOPAEDIC SPINE SURGEON



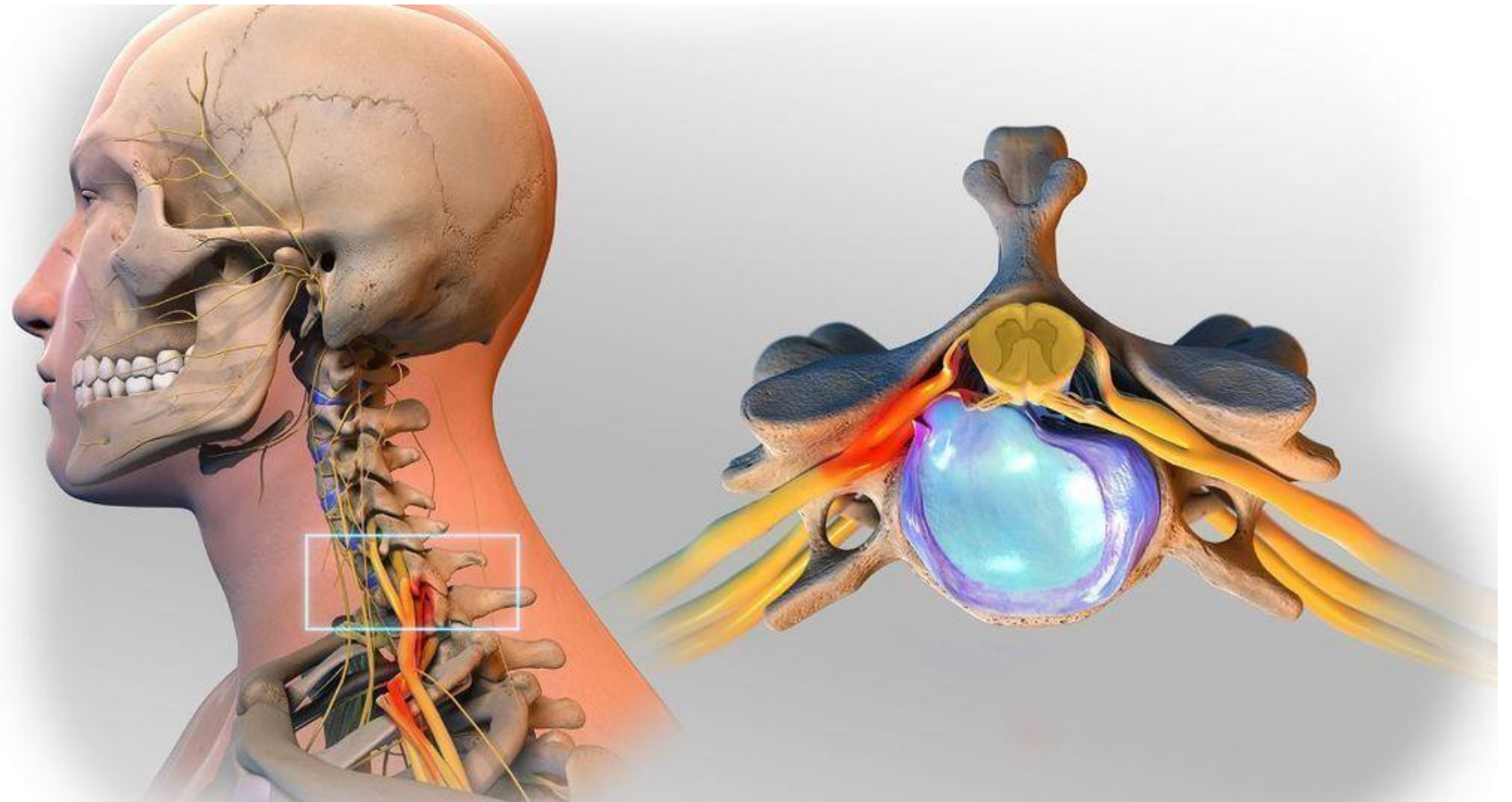
- Spinal surgeon with over 20 years' experience
- Head of Department of Orthopaedics and Supervisor of Training for Orthopaedic Trainees, Prince of Wales Hospital
- Conjoint Senior Lecturer at the University of New South Wales
- Honorary Senior Scientist at Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) and a member of Spinal PFET.

Dedicated to lifelong learning and sharing my expertise with others, I attend spinal conferences worldwide and regularly consult with colleagues about successful treatments.

If you have any questions about a patient, please feel free to call me on 02 9650 4893. I will return your call and discuss how we can help.

Cervical disc herniation

Patho-anatomy



Inflammatory effects generate acute radicular pain

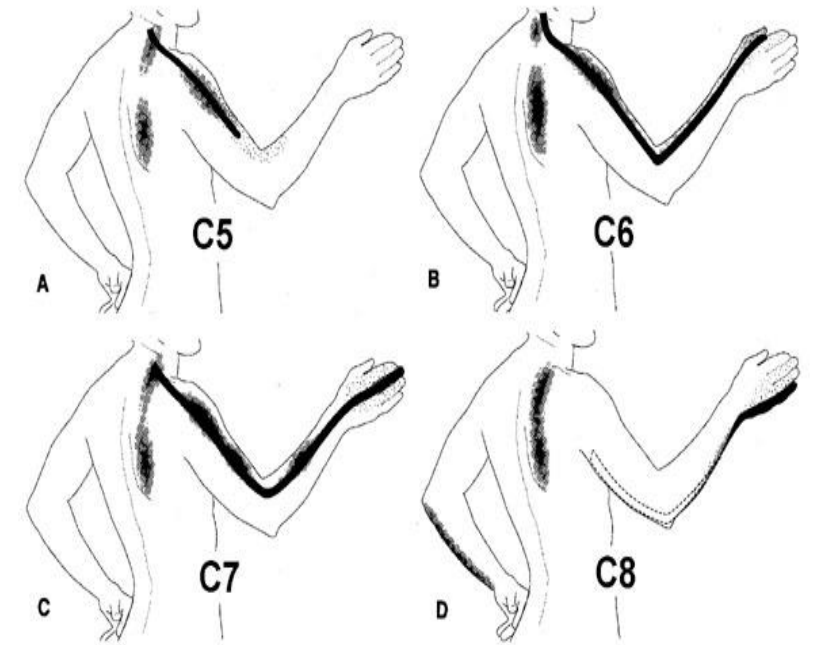
Clinical picture

- Abrupt onset
- Often wake with 'cricked neck' and pain
- May be result of injury
- Back of shoulder
- Shooting to upper limb
 - Tingling, numbness



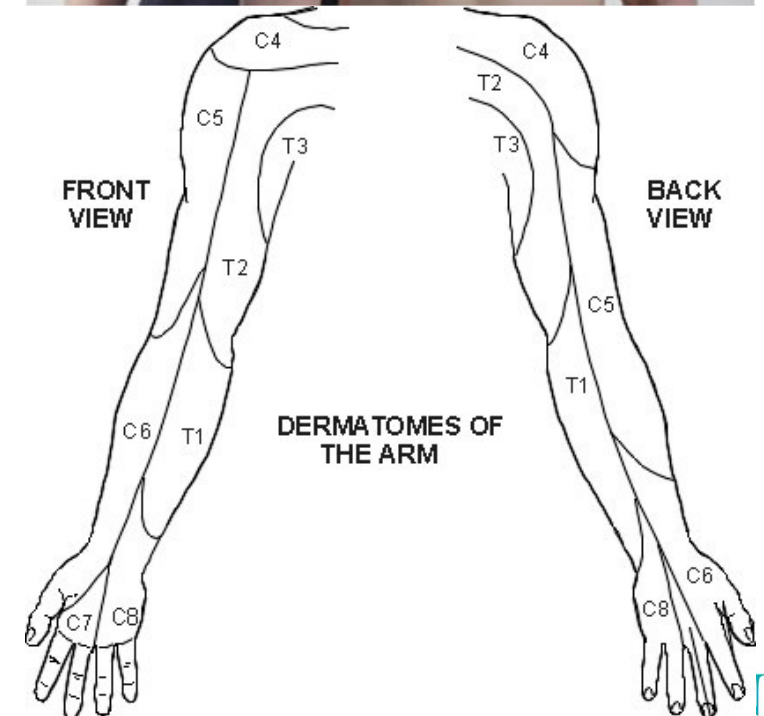
Nerve roots

- C5 to lateral shoulder and arm (mimic shoulder disease)
- C6 to thumb
- C7 to index finger
- Should affect dorsum as well as palmar aspects of hand
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
 - May have pain whole upper limb
 - Numbness is restricted to palm



Signs

- Spurling's nerve irritation
- Weakness
 - C5 elbow flexion
 - C6 wrist extension
 - C7 finger extension
- Altered sensation



Natural history

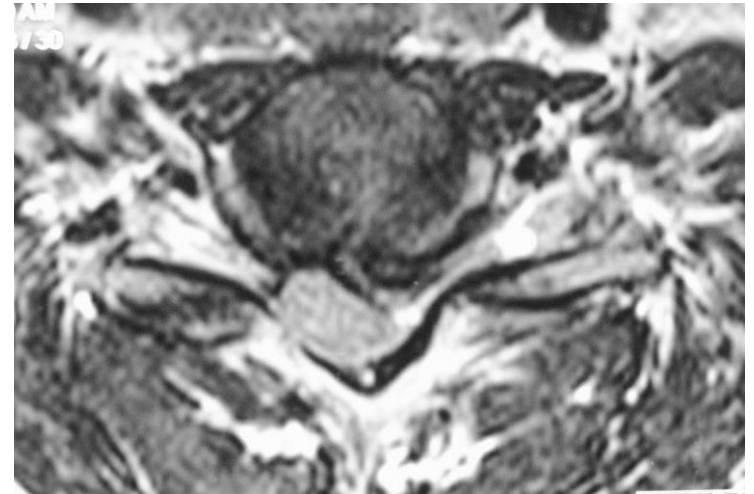
Pain quite severe for a few weeks

Resolution 3 – 6 months

At 2-3 years almost all have minimal or no symptoms

Imaging

- CT scan OK
- MRI scan much better



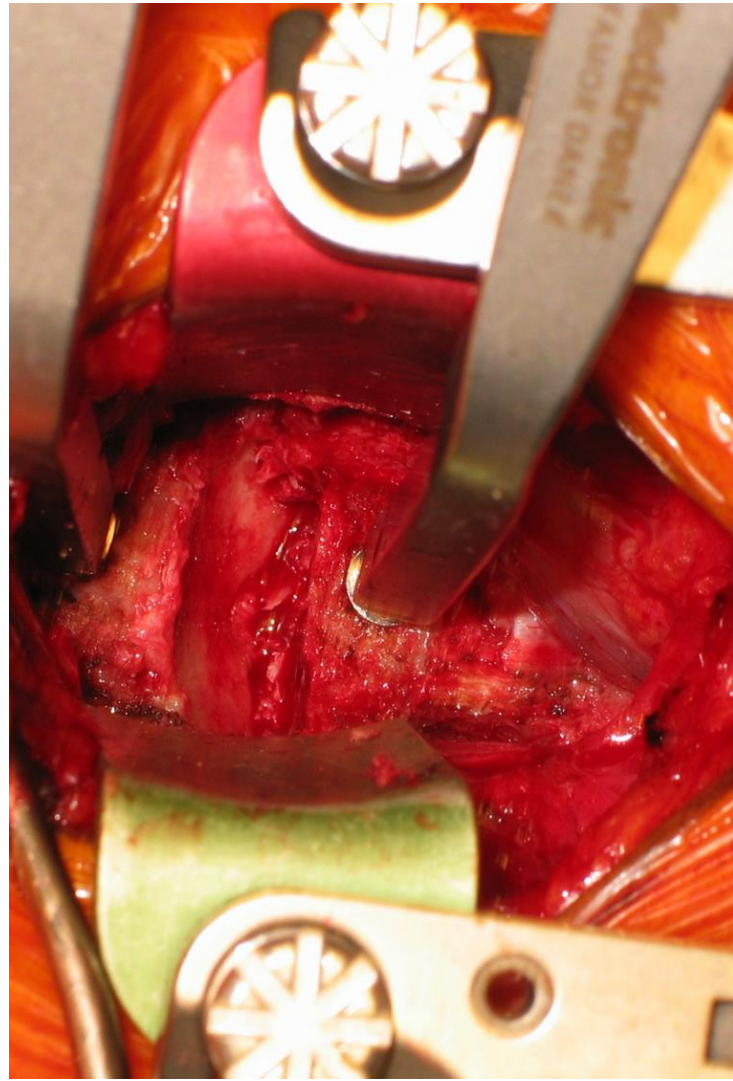
Management

- Explanation and reassurance
- NSAIDs, paracetamol
- Opioids sparingly
- Nerve root sleeve injection cortisone
- Low impact activity
- Therapy

Surgical intervention

- Persistent severe pain
- Significant or progressive motor deficit
 - 3/5 or worse

Anterior discectomy



Fusion or disc replacement



Recovery

- 2-3 days in hospital
- No collar
- Swallowing discomfort few days
- Non manual work 2 – 3 weeks
- Manual work 6 – 12 weeks, less for disc replacement

Q & A

- A **recording** of the webinar will be available on my website
- **Further resources for GPs** are available at <https://spinalsurgeonsydney.com.au/for-referrers>
- **To receive future resources via email**, send your name and email address to info@powspine.com.au

As always if you have any questions about a patient, please feel free to call me on 02 9650 4893. I will return your call and discuss how we can help.

You can also reach me via ralphstanford@powspine.com.au.



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