

Imaging Insights

Lumbar Spine

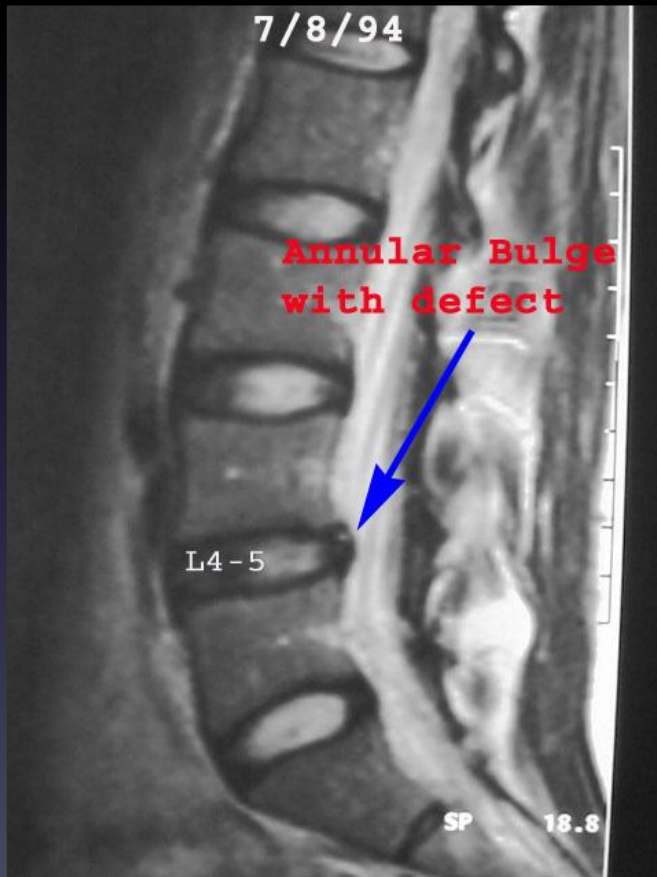
And

Pre-existing conditions

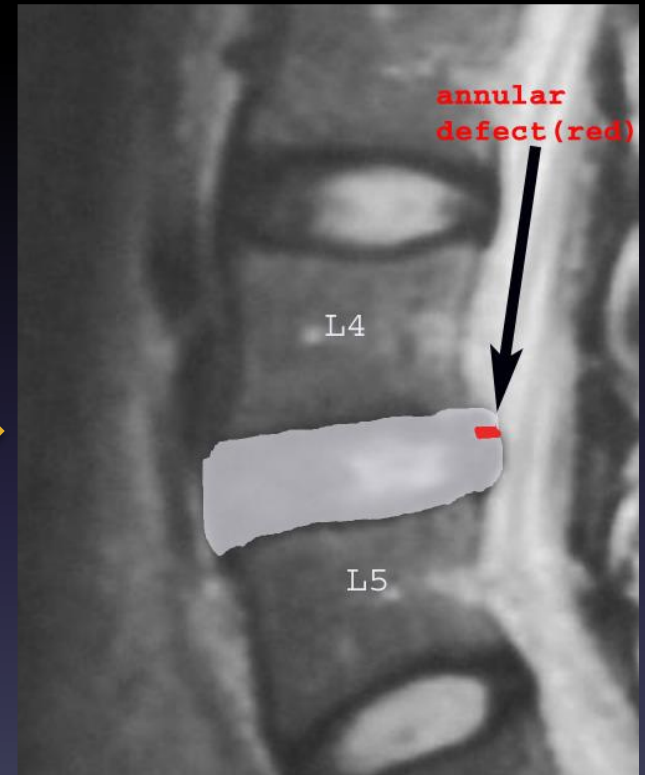
In this case, a 40 year old woman was in a motor vehicle accident. An MRI performed approximately 9 years prior to the accident had shown a disc bulge, but no mention was made of an annular tear.

The post accident studies were variously described as disc bulges or herniations with an annular tear.

Lumbar MRI 9 yrs prior to accident

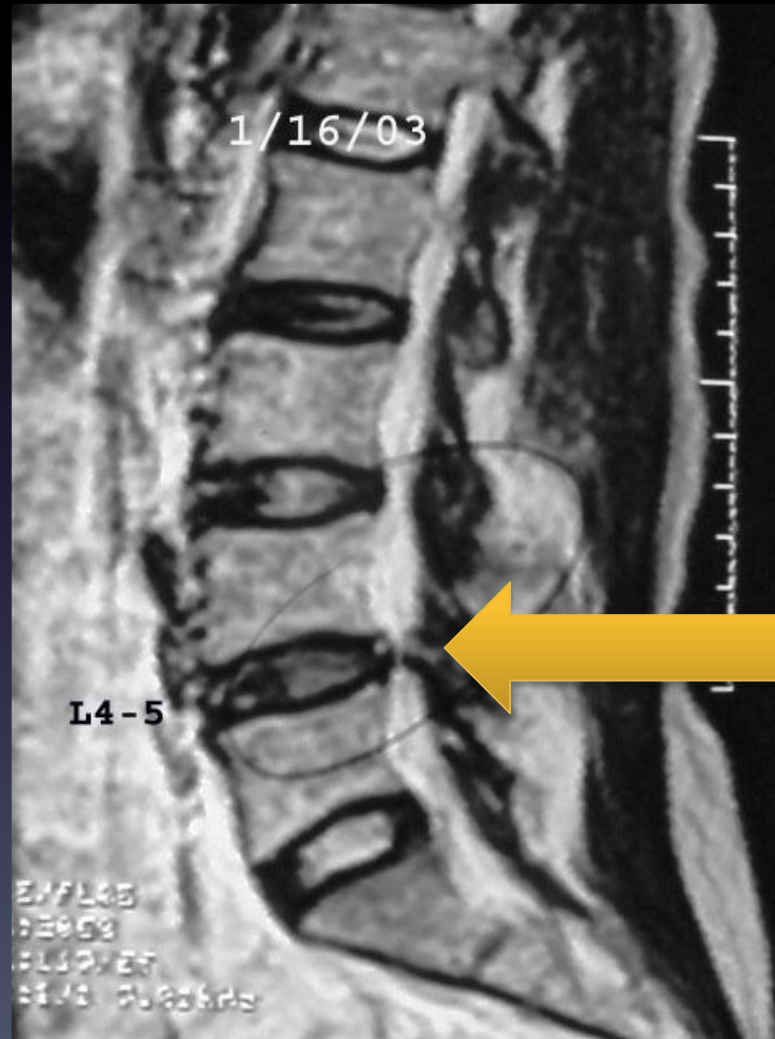


Mag view



Review of the studies clearly showed that an annular tear was present on the pre-accident study, and that there were no changes in the appearance of the L4-5 disc pre and post accident, eliminating the possibility that there was a disc herniation causally related to the accident.

Immediate post-accident MRI



Serial, side-by-side images of the various studies, helped to illustrate the pre-existence of the findings at L4-5. A schematic depiction of the pre-accident MRI also helped to point out to the jury the somewhat subtle, relevant pre-existing findings.

4 subsequent scans all show same findings



Take home points

- The medical record is often fragmented and prior conditions may not be known.
- Prior exams may shed light on current situation.
- The record may not reflect the presence of a prior condition.
- Various terminology in reporting may actually be describing the same findings.
- A demonstrative exhibit can clearly unify the relevant themes.