

Does McKenzie Therapy Improve Outcomes For Back Pain?

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Reference/Citation: Clare H, Adams R, and Maher C. A systematic review of efficacy of McKenzie therapy for spinal pain. *Aus J Physiother.* 2004; 50:209-216. **Clinical Question:** What is the clinical evidence base for McKenzie therapy in management of back pain? **Data Sources:** Studies were identified using a computer-based literature search on a total of seven databases: MEDLINE, EMBASE, DARE, CINAHL, PEDro, the Cochrane Register of Clinical Trials (CENTRAL), and the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. Search terms included *McKenzie therapy, McKenzie treatment, and McKenzie method.* **Study Selection:** Randomized controlled trials investigating the efficacy of McKenzie therapy in comparison to other conservative treatments were selected. Studies reported specific outcome measures such as: pain, disability, quality of life, work status, global perceived effect, medication use, health care contacts, or recurrence. Six trials were eligible. Comparison treatments included: NSAIDs, educational booklet, massage/back care advice, strength training, or spinal mobilization. **Data Extraction:** Eligible studies were rated for methodologic quality using the PEDro scale. Selected articles focused either on pain or disability at short term (<3 months) or intermediate (3-12 months) follow-up. No study included long term (>12 months) measurements. Data from included studies were pooled and normalized for scoring on a 100 point scale. **Main Results:** McKenzie therapy improved both pain and disability measures at short term follow-up when compared to the treatments previously mentioned. Trends favoring McKenzie therapy at intermediate follow-up were found, while no studies measured long term follow-up. **Conclusions:** McKenzie therapy is effective in decreasing pain and disability in the short term compared to other treatments. **Key Words:** Spine, Lumbar Pain Management, Treatment

Efficacy **Commentary:** Although there is clinical evidence that McKenzie therapy is an effective method for managing back pain in the short term compared to other therapies, future research should look at the effectiveness of McKenzie therapy for neurological symptoms and neck pain. Clinicians might consider this information before becoming a certified McKenzie therapist.