

Degenerative Spinal Phenotypes Focus Group

Creating a common language to advance knowledge

Background

There is great interest in findings observed on clinical imaging, such as Modic changes, disc degeneration, paraspinal muscle fatty infiltration, endplate irregularities, etc. Yet there is a lack of uniformity in terminology, definitions and measurement, as well as disagreement on their roles in painful spinal conditions. Clear definitions and more uniform use of terms and core measures are needed to facilitate accurate communication in medicine and research, avoid unnecessary confusion and allow clearer comparisons and syntheses of related study results to advance knowledge. The Degenerative Spinal Phenotypes Focus Group continues to work toward this goal.

The attendance of leaders of regional spine societies (Asia, Europe, North America, India, etc.), spine journal editorial board members and other international leaders in clinical care and research makes the ISSLS meeting an ideal forum for the Focus Group.

Focus of Upcoming Meeting

At the next meeting we plan to discuss progress and outcomes since the last Focus Group meeting and the next steps to advance the measurement and reporting of endplate findings. Then, we will turn our attention to paraspinal muscle phenotypes, which the group expressed interest in tackling next.

Similar to our approach to other phenotypes, a series of brief ‘state of the art’ background presentations will fuel discussion and inform plans related to paraspinal muscle, including:

- A review of current paraspinal muscle measurements (psychometric properties, practicalities and technical issues, including various imaging modalities, MRI sequences, paraspinal muscle ROI segmentation and related software, and their effects on measurement)
- Normative data on paraspinal muscle morphology and composition and the effects of age and physical activity.
- Clinical relevance of paraspinal muscle morphology and composition, including their correlation with paraspinal muscle function and back symptoms.

The background presentations and discussion will inform considerations, next steps and, ultimately, recommendations for measurement standardization and reporting of paraspinal muscle composition and morphology.

We welcome your attendance!

The Co-chairs, *Michele C. Battié, Dino Samartzis, Josef Assheuer, & Bradley Weiner*