



The University of  
**Nottingham**

UNITED KINGDOM • CHINA • MALAYSIA

Debnath, Ujjwal Kanti (2010) Factors predicting the outcome following treatment for lumbar spondylolysis. DM thesis, University of Nottingham.

**Access from the University of Nottingham repository:**

<http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/12780/2/Titlepage%26contents2009.pdf>

**Copyright and reuse:**

The Nottingham ePrints service makes this work by researchers of the University of Nottingham available open access under the following conditions.

This article is made available under the University of Nottingham End User licence and may be reused according to the conditions of the licence. For more details see: [http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/end\\_user\\_agreement.pdf](http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/end_user_agreement.pdf)

For more information, please contact [eprints@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:eprints@nottingham.ac.uk)

# **FACTORS PREDICTING THE OUTCOME FOLLOWING TREATMENT FOR LUMBAR SPONDYLOLYSIS**

**Ujjwal K Debnath  
MBBS, FRCS, MS (Orth), FRCS (T&O)**

**Thesis re-submitted to the University of Nottingham  
for the degree Doctor of Medicine (DM)**

**Sept 2009**



# Table of Contents

<b>Pages</b>	
Title Page	i
Table of Contents	ii-vii
List of Figures	viii-x
List of Tables	xi -xiv
Abstracts	xv-xx
Foreward	xxi
Declaration	xxii
Acknowledgements	xxiii-iv
Dedication	xxv
<b>Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1-9</b>
1.1 Definition	3
1.2 Overview	3
1.2.1 General population	
1.2.2 Sporting population	
1.3 Natural history	4
1.3.1 Symptomatic vs Asymptomatic defects	
1.4 Treatment of symptomatic defects	6
1.5 Surgical management & Outcome	7
1.6 Factors affecting union of Pars Interarticularis defect	7
1.7 Study origin	8
1.8 Aims of Research	9
<b>Chapter 2: ANATOMY &amp; ETIOLOGICAL FACTORS</b>	<b>10-28</b>
2.1 Anatomy of pars interarticularis	11-14
2.1.1 Posterior elements	11
2.1.2 Facet Joint	12
2.1.3 Lamina	13
2.1.4 Pedicles	14
2.2 Etiological factors	15-17
2.2.1 Biomechanical	15-17
2.2.2 Heredity & familial tendencies	18-19
2.3.3 Racial Variation	20
2.3.4 Developmental & Embryological factors	21-23
2.3.5 Acute Trauma or a fatigue fracture	23-24
2.3.6 Sporting association	24-26
2.3.7 Association of other vertebral anomalies	27-28

<b>Chapter 3: REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b>	29-51
3.1 Diagnosis & Management Strategies	30-49
3.1.1 Symptomatology	30-34
3.1.2 Diagnostic strategies	34-39
3.1.3 Management strategies	39-49
3.2 Developing the Research	50
<b>Chapter 4: METHODS</b>	52-67
4.1 Research Question	52
4.2 Hypothesis	52-53
4.3 Study Design	54-57
4.3.1 Study 1	
4.3.2 Study 2	
4.4 Ethical Approval	57
4.5 Medical Record Review & Database	58-59
4.5.1 Background variables	
4.5.2 Treatment	
4.5.3 Objective variables	
4.5.4 Subjective variables	
4.6 Imaging studies	60
4.7 Questionnaires	60-61
4.7.1 VAS & ODI	
4.7.2 SF-36	
4.7.3 BPSQ	
4.8 Sample Size and Power study	61-63
4.8.1 Defining successful outcome	
4.9 Statistical analysis	64
4.10 Limitations of Methods	64-66
4.11 Surgeons who contributed	66

<b>Chapter 5: OUTCOME INSTRUMENTS IN LUMBAR SPONDYLOLYSIS</b>	68-76
5.1 Introduction	68
5.2 Outcome measures in spinal disorders	69-71
5.3 What is required to measure?	71
5.4 Role of Oswestry disability Index	72
5.5 Measuring pain	72
5.6 Role of SF-36	73
5.7 Need for new questionnaire	74-75
5.8 Conclusion	76
<b>Chapter 6: BACK PAIN &amp; SPORTS QUESTIONNAIRE (BPSQ)</b>	77-83
6.1 Introduction	78
6.2 What is BPSQ?	78
6.3 General characteristics	79
6.4 Weighting	79-82
6.4.1 Item measuring pain	
6.4.2 Item measuring sporting activity	
6.4.3 Item measuring treatment	
6.5 Validity of BPSQ	82-90
6.5.1 Criterion questionnaire	
6.5.2 Reliability	
6.5.3 Floor & Ceiling effect	
6.5.4 Responsiveness to change	
6.5.5 External Validity	
6.5.6 Availability & Ease of Administration	
6.6 Conclusion	90
<b>Chapter 7: RESULTS</b>	91-136
<b>7.1 STUDY 1</b>	91-108
7.1.1 Patient Demographics	92-101
i) Target subject group	
ii) Age & Sex	
iii) Sports	
iv) Laterality & Sports	
v) Low Back Pain	
vi) Investigations	
vii) Site & type of pars defect	
viii) Outcome of conservative treatment	
ix) Unilateral versus bilateral	
7.1.2 Return to Sports	101-102
i) Male vs Female	
ii) Unilateral versus bilateral	
iii) Outcome scores	

7.1.3 Correlational Statistics	103-108
i) Paired t-test	
a) Null hypothesis A to A <sub>5</sub>	
ii) Unilateral versus bilateral lumbar spondylolysis	
b) Null hypothesis A <sub>6</sub>	
iii) Sporting versus Non sporting	
c) Null hypothesis A <sub>7</sub> , A <sub>8</sub>	
iv) Correlation testing	
<b>7.2 STUDY 2</b>	109-136
7.2.1 Patient Demographics	109-118
i) Target subject group	
ii) Age & Sex	
iii) Sports	
iv) Low Back Pain	
v) Site & Type of Pars Interarticularis defect	
vi) Surgical treatment	
vii) Outcome of surgical treatment	
a) Male versus female	
b) Unilateral versus bilateral	
c) Return to sports	
7.2.2 Correlation Statistics	118-123
i) Paired t-test	
d) Null hypothesis B to B <sub>5</sub>	
ii) Unilateral versus bilateral lumbar spondylolysis	
e) Null hypothesis B <sub>6</sub>	
iii) Correlation testing	
7.2.3 Multiple Regression Analysis	124-131
i) Distribution of data	
ii) Co-linearity	
iii) Stepwise linear regression	
iv) Regression model	
a) Multiple correlation	
b) Regression coefficient	
c) Significance testing	
d) Multivariate analysis	
e) Regression equation	
f) Residuals	
<b>7.3 COMBINED STUDY 1 &amp; 2</b>	132-136
7.3.1 Receiver Operating Characteristics (ROC)	
i) Interpretation	
ii) Summary	
<b>Chapter 8: DISCUSSION</b>	137-164
8.1 STUDY 1	138-148
8.1.1 Age & gender	
8.1.2 Imaging (SPECT versus MRI)	

8.1.3 Bracing versus No bracing	
8.1.4 Physical therapy & rehabilitation	
8.1.5 Individual sports	
i) Cricket	
ii) Soccer	
iii) Gymnast	
8.1.6 Laterality of pars lesion	
8.1.7 Lumbar level	
8.1.8 Return to sports	
8.1.9 Summary	
<b>8.2 STUDY 2</b>	<b>149-164</b>
8.2.1 Age	
8.2.2 Gender	
8.2.3 Sporting versus non sporting	
8.2.4 Types of sports	
8.2.5 Professional versus non professional	
8.2.6 Imaging	
8.2.7 Unilateral versus bilateral	
8.2.8 Levels of spondylolysis	
8.2.9 Outcome scores	
8.2.10 Predicting post-operative outcome	
8.2.11 Outcome of Buck's direct repair	
8.2.12 Role of early surgery in lumbar spondylolysis	
8.2.13 Summary	
<b>Chapter 9: CONCLUSION</b>	<b>165-171</b>
9.1 Study 1	166
9.2 Study 2	167
9.3 Model Case & Outcome	168
9.4 Strength & weakness of the study	169-171
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>172-199</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>200-206</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Glossary</b>	<b>200-202</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Ethical Committee Approval</b>	<b>203-204</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Patient Consent</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Patient Information Sheets</b>	<b>206</b>
<b>Appendix 5: Questionnaires</b>	<b>207-213</b>
1) <b>VAS</b>	
2) <b>ODI</b>	
3) <b>SF-36</b>	
4) <b>BPSQ</b>	
<b>Appendix 6: CD ROM</b>	
1) <b>Tables</b>	
2) <b>SPSS data</b>	
<b>LEVEL OF EVIDNECE</b>	
<b>PUBLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE RESEARCH</b>	

## List of Figures

- Figure 1** Five lumbar vertebrae in an old skeleton with a unilateral pars defect at right L5 vertebra. (From Hamann Todd Collection, Natural History Museum, Cleveland, USA).
- Figure 2a & b** Antero-posterior & Lateral radiograph of a 2month-old-girl child with normal pars interarticularis
- Figure 2c** Lateral myelogram of the same child as above showing L5/S1 spondyloptosis when she consulted at the age of 19years
- Figure 3** A 3D CT reconstruction film showing a left L5 pars defect with a gap of a 20-year-old cricket fast bowler
- Figure 4a & b** SPECT image and rgCT scan of a 23-year-old male professional footballer with left L5 pars defect treated conservatively with a successful outcome
- Figure 5a & b** SPECT image and rgCT scan of a 17-year-old male professional footballer showing bilateral L4 pars defects treated successfully by non-operative methods
- Figure 6a & b** MRI (T<sub>1</sub>W) and rgCT scan of a 24-year-old male professional footballer showing healing bilateral L5 pars defects treated conservatively followed by a successful outcome
- Figure 7a, b  
c & d** MRI (T<sub>2</sub>W) and rgCT scan of a 18-year-old male county cricket (fast bowler) showing healed left L5 pars defect and an ipsilateral healing L3 pars defect treated conservatively followed by a successful outcome
- Figure 8a & b** MRI (T<sub>2</sub>W) and rgCT scan of a 24-year-old male amateur footballer showing bilateral L5 pars defect with a gap with sacralization of L5 and a degenerate disc at L5/S1 treated conservatively with an unsuccessful outcome (BPSQ score was 40)
- Figure 9a, b  
c & d** Plain X-rays (Antero-posterior & Lateral), MRI (T<sub>2</sub>W) and rgCT scans showing unilateral left L5 spondylolysis with spina bifida at the same level in a 11-year-old gymnast
- Figure 9e & f** 3D CT reconstruction images showing the left pars defect without any defect on the right side associated with a bifid spine
- Figure 9e & f** 3D CT reconstruction images showing the left pars defect without any defect on the right side associated with a bifid spine



- Figure 9g & h** Plain X-rays (Antero-posterior & Lateral) showing the Buck's repair of the pars defect with wiring of the bifid spine
- Figure 10a, b  
c & d** Plain X-rays (AP & Lateral) and MRI (T1W and T2W) showing ipsilateral L5 pars defect in a 16-year-old cricket (bowler)
- Figure 10e** rgCT scan of the same patient showing bilateral L5 non healing pars defect of the above patient
- Figure 10f** Intra-operative image showing the technique of Buck's direct repair
- Figure 10g & h** Two years post-operative plain X-rays (AP & Lateral) showing healed pars lesion following Buck's repair
- Figure 11a & b** Plain X-rays (AP & Lateral) showing healed bilateral L4 spondylolysis following Buck's repair in a 14-year-old school level tennis player
- Figure 12a & b** Plain X-rays (AP & Lateral) showing Modified Scotts repair using bilateral pedicle screws and wire for L3 spondylolysis
- Figure 13a & b** Plain X-ray (AP) & rgCT scan of a 20-year old girl showing spina bifida with a right sided pars defect at L5
- Figure 13c** Plain X-rays at 6 months following direct repair of right L5 pars with screw in situ
- Figure 13d** rgCT scan at 18 months showing the non-union of the pars with screw in-situ
- Figure 14a, b  
c & d** Plain X-rays (AP & Lateral) and CT scans of a 20-year-old non-professional footballer who had a symptomatic non-union of bilateral L4 pars defect at two years following Buck's repair
- Figure 15** Chart outlining the management strategy for young athlete with lumbar pars lesion at QMC, Nottingham
- Figure 16** Algorithm followed at QMC, Nottingham, proceeding to surgical repair of lumbar spondylolysis
- Figure 17** Flowchart showing number of patients and their pathway
- Figure 18** Flowchart of the methods applied
- Figure 19** Graph showing the ROC (Receiver Operating Characteristics) for BPSQ (Back Pain & Sports Questionnaire) scores

- Figure 20** Graph showing the ROC for post VAS scores
- Figure 21** Graph showing the ROC for post ODI scores
- Figure 22** Box Plot showing the mean age in unilateral and bilateral pars defect in Study 1
- Figure 23** Bar diagram showing grades of increased uptake in SPECT at different lumbar levels in 87 patients of Study 1
- Figure 24** Global SF-36 scores of all male and female patients showing pre-treatment and 24 months post treatment in the Study 1
- Figure 25** Histogram showing normal distribution of the mean difference in ODI scores in Study 1
- Figure 26** Box Plot showing the mean age in unilateral and bilateral pars defect in Study 2
- Figure 27** Global SF-36 scores of all male and female patients showing preoperative and 24 months postoperative in the Study 2
- Figure 28** Q-Q plot showing the normal distribution of Pre operative ODI scores
- Figure 29** Normal P-P plot showing the linearity of the post operative ODI scores
- Figure 30** Histogram with normal curve showing standardized residuals for the variables put in the regression model
- Figure 31** Graph showing the ROC for pre VAS scores in the combined Study 1 & 2
- Figure 32** Graph showing the ROC for pre ODI scores in the combined Study 1 & 2
- Figure 33** Graph showing the ROC for pre SF-36pcs scores in the combined study

# **Abstract of Study 1**

## **Study design**

A non –randomised continuous retrospective cross sectional and observational study

## **Objective**

- 1) To evaluate the results of nonoperative treatment of symptomatic lumbar pars stress injuries or spondylolysis in sporting as well as non sporting individuals
- 2) To determine the factors responsible for non-operative method of managing symptomatic lumbar spondylolysis in young population
- 3) To evaluate the outcome in different types of sports
- 4) To establish the role of compulsory non-operative treatment for symptomatic lumbar spondylolysis in sporting individuals

## **Summary of Background Data**

The treatment and management of symptomatic spondylolysis in sporting populations is mainly based on observation rather than experimental study.

Conservative treatment in the form of bracing and avoidance of sports for at least three to six months has been recommended. Excellent or good results following bracing and physical therapy have been observed in 80% patients. Criteria for return to sport are dominated by symptom led decisions.

## **Methods**

The research was carried out as a qualitative, descriptive and analytic study with a non-randomised cohort of patients investigated for spondylolysis in a single centre. A total number of 123 patients treated conservatively following confirmation by imaging studies (SPECT,CT or MRI scans) as having stress fractures of the lumbar pars interarticularis (PI) ranging in age from 8 to 35 years have been selected for the study. All patients attending the Back pain clinic has to follow a protocol of filling up the VAS, ODI and SF-36 questionnaires as a part of their assessment. At the time of the study these questionnaires along with the Back Pain & Sports Questionnaire (BPSQ) were sent to all but only 123 patients responded who were included in the study 1. The background data contains gender, age, date of onset of symptoms with current limitation in sport, pain in flexion or extension, type of sport, level of sport and length of treatment.

The data also contains each subject with level, number, laterality and distribution of lumbar spondylolysis, investigations, outcome with VAS, ODI, SF-36 and Back pain and sports questionnaire (BPSQ) and return to sports. We classified the individual sports into seven types depending on the major movements of the body. Descriptive and analytical statistics was performed along with correlation testing between the outcome measures and predictive factors.

## **Results**

The mean age of onset of back pain was 21.7years (range 8-35years). Most patients were between the ages of 15&19 years (43) followed by 20&24 years (32). The Male: Female ratio was 74:49. There were 98/123 (76.9%) sporting individuals. 35/98 (35%) were professional players, 29/98 (29.5%) were semi professional and 34/98 (34.6%) were amateur sportsmen and women. Cricket (22) followed by Football (22) were the most common type of sports played. Trunk twisting movement was the common denominator in most of the patients with pars defect. The cricketers (13) with unilateral pars defect had more commonly left sided pars defect than the right (10 left vs 3 right). Right sided pars defect was more commonly observed in soccer players (7:1). Most incomplete fractures were observed at L4 in the cricketers. The non sporting group had consulted with a delay of more than six months since the onset of pain. 60% pars lesion was observed at L5 followed by L4 (11.3%), L3 (9.7%) and L2 (2.4%). At L5 most were bilateral lesions (81%). Spina bifida was recorded in 16% patients.

The mean pre and post treatment VAS score was 4.5 and 0.65 respectively (SD-0.8, $p<0.01$ ). The mean pre and post treatment ODI was 35.5 (SD-7.8) and 6.9 (SD-7.6) respectively ( $p<0.01$ ). In the SF-36 scores, the mean score for the physical component of health improved from 34.9 (SD – 5.3) to 49.3 (SD -6.6) ( $p<0.001$ ). The mean score for the mental component of health improved from 40.2 (SD -5.2) to 52.0 (SD-6.0) ( $p<0.001$ ). The mean BPSQ score was 52.5 (range 0-90). The mean pre-treatment and post-treatment VAS and ODI scores were slightly better in males as compared to females.

In the unilateral group, 28/36 (77%) patients had complete relief of pain by a mean time of 4.2months (range 3-7months). In the bilateral group, 47/59 (79%) patients had complete pain relief at a mean time of 6.5 months (3-12months).

In the unilateral pars defect group, 32/36 sporting individuals returned to active sports. In the bilateral pars defect group, 49/59 sporting individuals returned to active sports. There was significant difference between the sporting and the non-sporting group in their age (mean 20.7 vs 25.4 years,  $p < 0.001$ ). There was significant difference between the two groups in all pre and post treatment outcome scores. The pre treatment VAS score had most significant correlation with post treatment ODI ( $\rho = 0.634$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and post treatment VAS scores ( $\rho = 0.626$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

### **Conclusion**

A treatment protocol of rest for 4-6 weeks followed by the functional restorative program has excellent or good outcome in 85% sporting individuals with symptomatic pars defect. Male sporting individuals have better outcome than females. Unilateral pars lesions have a better outcome than bilateral pars lesions. Bracing may not be required in most patients if the pain subsides on restriction of activity. Full functional recovery to previous level of activity is possible with the help of dynamic spinal stabilization exercises and physical therapy. The individuals involved in trunk twisting sports should be evaluated carefully for muscle imbalance in the lumbar spine and they should have altered techniques of sporting activity without compromising the performance in the rehabilitation phase.

## **Abstract of Study 2**

### **Study Design**

A non –randomised continuous retrospective observational study

### **Objective**

- 1) To identify the most significant determinant of surgical intervention in lumbar pars defect
- 2) To identify the independent factors that predict a successful outcome following surgery for lumbar pars defect in young sporting individuals
- 3) Can we establish an outcome predictive model based on these significant factors responsible for a successful outcome?

### **Summary of Background Data**

Most athletes or young active professional sportsmen or women would like to return to their previous level of sports since they may be earning their livelihood through the sport. Early onset of symptoms and conservative treatment in these patients may lead to a good clinical outcome but it is difficult to predict which group or which individuals will require surgical repair of the defect. Young athletes to have returned to competitive sports after surgery have been reported only in few previous papers. The first cohort from this series was published in 2003. ODI (Oswestry Disability Index) and SF-36 (Short form) scores were used to evaluate the final outcome for the first time in lumbar spondyloysis for outcome analysis.

### **Methods**

A total number of 55 patients treated operatively following confirmation by imaging studies (SPECT,CT or MRI scans) as having stress fractures of the lumbar pars interarticularis (PI) ranging in age from 8 to 35 years have been selected for the study. All patients attending the Back pain clinic has to follow a protocol of filling up the VAS, ODI and SF-36 questionnaires as a part of their assessment. At the time of the study these questionnaires along with the Back Pain & Sports Questionnaire (BPSQ) were sent to all but only 50/55 patients responded. The background data contains gender, age, date of onset of symptoms with current limitation in sport, pain in flexion or extension, type of sport, level of sport and length of treatment. The data also contains each subject with level, number, laterality and distribution of lumbar spondylolysis, investigations, outcome with VAS, ODI, SF-36 and Back pain & sports questionnaire (BPSQ) and return to sports.

Descriptive and analytical statistics was performed along with correlation testing between the outcome measures and predictive factors. Multiple regression analysis was carried out with post-operative ODI as the dependent variable to identify the predictor variables and develop a regression equation to predict the outcome. Receiver operating characteristics (ROC) estimation was also carried out combining the conservative (Study 1) and operative (Study 2) group to identify the significant predictor of surgery.

## **Results**

The mean age of onset of back pain was 18.3 years, ranging from 8 to 35 years. For analyzing further to assess the significance of age in the treatment of spondylolysis we divided the patients into five groups of age. The groups were: 1) 8-14 years, 2) 15-19 years, 3) 20-24 years, 4) 25-29 years and 5) >30 years. We had 10 patients in Group 1, 24 patients in group 2, 11 patients in group 3, 7 patients in group 4 and 3 patients in group 5. The Male: Female ratio was 40:15 (73% male). There was 52/55 (94%) subjects were involved in sports of which most common sport was Football (22) followed by cricket (8), gymnastics (3), swimming (3), athletics (3) tennis (3) and others. 27/52 (52%) were professional players, 14/52 (27%) were semi professional and 7/52 (13.5%) were amateur sportsmen and women. The number of patients in the *kicking* sports was 26/52 (50%) and *throwing and trunk twisting* sports were 2/52 (3.8%) and 24/52 (46.2%) respectively. The mean duration of symptoms before surgery was 5.7 months (3 to 36).

The lumbar levels were 43/55 (78%) at L5, 3/55 (5.5%) at L4 and 4/55 (7.2%) at L3. Multiple level involvements were observed in 5/55 (9%). Modified Buck's screw repair of the pars defect was carried out in 44 patients (33M:11 F). Unilateral repair was performed in 8 patients (7M:1F) and bilateral repair was performed in 36 patients (26M:10F).

The mean pre treatment and post treatment VAS score was 6.6 (SD-0.97) and 0.8 (SD-1.12) respectively [ $p<0.01$ ]. The mean pretreatment ODI was 37.6 (SD -10.5) and the mean post-treatment ODI was 9.2 (SD – 13.4) [ $p<0.01$ ]. In the SF-36 scores, the mean score for the physical component of health improved from 32.7 (SD – 7.1) to 50.1 (SD -8.8) ( $p< 0.001$ ). The mean score for the mental component of health improved from 42.8 (SD -8.4) to 54.4 (SD-8.2) ( $p<0.001$ ). The mean BPSQ score was 49.6 (range 15-73).

In the unilateral group with Buck's repair, 7/8 (87%) patients had complete relief of pain at a mean time of 6.5months (range 6-9months) following surgery.

In the bilateral group, with Buck's repair in single level i.e. 33/36 (93%) patients had complete pain relief at a mean time of 7.5 months (6-12months). 44/52 (84%) individuals had returned to the sports. In the bilateral pars defect group, there were 19 footballers at various levels. Of these 14 returned to the same level at which they had been competing before the onset of their symptoms. All the sporting individuals who returned to sports had their post-treatment ODI score of <10 and minimum BPSQ scores of 48.

The preoperative VAS score was significantly correlated with the post-operative VAS i.e.  $\rho = 0.53$  ( $p < 0.01$ ) and both pre & post operative ODI scores i.e.  $\rho = 0.51$  ( $p < 0.01$ ) and  $\rho = 0.33$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) respectively.

When the regression modeling was completed the independent variables included were (preoperative ODI, preoperative SF36pcs, Buck's repair, multiple operations, professional sporting individual and pars defect at L3), the adjusted  $R^2$  was 0.809. This indicates that the regression model is a good predictor of the outcome variable i.e. post-operative ODI. The independent variables which are selected by the regression model have significant effect on the post-operative ODI. The multiple linear equation for predicting post operative ODI scores is:

Post operative ODI score =  $30.121 + (0.327 \times \text{pre operative ODI score}) + (-0.581 \times \text{preoperative SF36pcs score}) + (-11.872 \times \text{Bucks repair}) + (26.503 \times \text{Multiple operation}) + (-6.792 \times \text{professional}) + (21.034 \times \text{L3 pars defect})$ .

In the ROC estimation the area under the curve (AUC) for pre treatment VAS score was 0.94 (CI: 0.904 – 0.974,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that the pre treatment VAS scores are the best indicator of a patient requiring surgery over the period of 6-12 months.

## **Conclusion**

The outcome following direct repair of pars defect beyond 30 years of age is unpredictable. There is no difference in the functional outcome between the two genders. Preoperative VAS score of >6 is the most sensitive indicator (90%) for direct repair of pars defect. Professionalism in sports has a high impact on the outcome of an individual following surgical repair of the defect. Unilateral spondylolysis do slightly better than bilateral spondylolysis following Buck's repair. Preoperative ODI and SF-36 pcs scores are significant predictor of a good functional outcome. BPSQ scores may be able to predict the return of sporting individuals to respective sports following treatment for lumbar spondylolysis. The predictive model presented above could predict the outcome in 82.8 % sporting individuals undergoing Buck's repair.



## Foreword

I am delighted to be able to write a foreword for the thesis for DM (Orth) written by Mr Ujjwal K Debnath, FRCS, titled “*Factors predicting the outcome following treatment for lumbar spondylolysis*”.

I have known Ujjwal since 1999 when he became interested in reviewing spondylolytic patients treated in the Spinal Unit of which the majority of cases have been under my care. His interest has contributed significant knowledge to the management of spondylolysis. He has written extensively on this subject with four peer reviewed papers and three further papers which are likely to be published. It is good to see a detailed analysis of the outcome of patients who complained of pain associated with lumbar spondylolytic lesions. As a surgeon, we are interested in the surgical outcome but Ujjwal has taken great care in reviewing the results of the non-operative cases and this makes most interesting reading. He has introduced a Back Pain & Sports Questionnaire (BPSQ) which evaluates patients who have failed non-operative treatment. A return to sports can be predicted in such patients undergoing surgical repair of the spondylolytic lesion if the score is greater than 48. This is a valuable indicator in discussing the outcome of surgery with these patients. Ujjwal has made an extensive review of the literature and has put together algorithms for managing patients with lumbar spondylolytic lesions both non-operatively and operatively. This data is valuable for young surgeons beginning their career and needing information on the management of such cases.

John K Webb, FRCS  
Consultant Spine Surgeon  
The Centre for Spinal Studies & Surgery,  
QMC, Nottingham

## **Declaration**

This research on lumbar spondylolysis including the descriptive analysis has been carried out as a registered candidate at the University of Nottingham. I have undertaken the work contained within this thesis from designing to the final analysis of the results. The idea, data collection, final analysis, interpretation and conclusions drawn from this study are my own ably guided by the supervisors. Statistical outputs were provided by the statistician. This work has not been submitted in any previous application to this or any other University for higher degree as far as my knowledge.

Acknowledgements to those individuals who collaborated and assisted in this study are made overleaf.

## Acknowledgements

This dissertation would never have been written if it had not been for the encouragement, support, and assistance I received from a large number of people.

I would like to thank my principal collaborator cum clinical supervisor for this work, Professor Brian J C Freeman previously based at Queens Medical Centre, University of Nottingham from 2000-2007. He has been a constant source of encouragement as a friend and colleague. We have published few papers together while doing this study. I had been fortunate enough to have been his last trainee as a Spinal Fellow at the Queens Medical Centre, Nottingham before he left for taking up the Professorial chair and Head of the Unit at the University of Adelaide.

I owe my sincere gratitude to Ms Brigitte Scammell, Head of the department in the Division of Orthopaedics & Accident Surgery, University Hospital, Nottingham. At first I thank her for helping me to have the preliminary idea approved by the university. She then acted as my academic supervisor. Her constant support, periodic supervision and timely insight into the chapters have led to the completion of this thesis.

I owe my sincere thanks to Mr John K Webb, Consultant Spine Surgeon, Spinal Unit at QMC, Nottingham for his periodic advice regarding the subject. I also thank him for a large cohort of surgical patients of Buck's repair performed by him. I also have sincere thanks to Mr S M H Mehdian, Consultant Spine Surgeon, Spinal Unit, QMC, Nottingham for his constant support to do research and publication. A special thanks to Mr Michael P Grevitt, consultant Spine Surgeon, Spinal Unit, QMC, Nottingham for his timely review of my papers before publication with valuable comments for improvement in the script.

I owe my special thanks to the Spinal Unit for appointing me as a Spinal Fellow in 2007-08. Without this appointment it would have been impossible to accomplish this mammoth work which I had started in 1999, then working as a Senior House Officer in this unit. I have my sincere regards for Professor R C Mulholland, who was the Special Professor in Orthopaedics and Accident Surgery during 1999 for his thoughts and ideas on lumbar spondylolysis. My special thanks to all my colleagues who helped in this difficult times to pursue writing my thesis.

I am obliged to Mr J Hegarty, Clinical auditor in Spinal Unit for helping me with constant supply of case notes. He also used his resources towards the development of the BPSQ scoring system. I sincerely acknowledge Mr Michael Seagrave, Statistician for giving time and helping me with the analysis and interpretation of the large volume of data evolved. I also thank Mr Keith Streb, Medical Photographer for organizing the photographs included in the thesis.

I owe my special thanks to my friend Dr Jeffrey R McConnell, MD, Consultant Spine Surgeon, Allentown, PA, USA, who has been a constant source of moral support for this academic venture on spondylolysis.

My sincere thanks to the Programme Director of Orthopaedic training in Wales, Mr Mark Holt, and my senior Consultant colleagues in Wales, Mr Christopher Wilson and Mr Declan O'Doherty to have allowed me to complete the Spine Fellowship with a faith that I shall be able to complete this thesis.

I do wish to send my prayers to my mentor, Late Professor R N Mitra, Spine Surgeon (1919-1995) who had encouraged me to be a Spine Surgeon when I had just started my career as Orthopaedic Surgeon in India.

I have my sincere prayer towards my dear departed father, Mr Uddharan Debnath (1935-1984) who would have been proud to see his son's achievements.

No words of acknowledgement is sufficient to describe one person whose unqualified love and support helped me to survive ups and downs of this life, my dear mother, Mrs Hemnalini Debnath. Last but not least, I want to thank my sister and my two beautiful niece, friends, and dear ones for love and support.