

LETTERS



FUSION FOR LUMBAR SPINAL STENOSIS?

Surgery is not always best for lumbar spinal stenosis

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Cole's second sentence about lumbar spinal canal stenosis, "The condition is best managed surgically, but which operation should be used?"¹ is a highly contentious, sweeping generalisation, and I am surprised to see it in an editorial in *The BMJ*.

There is huge doubt about whether any intervention is better than none, and it is a perfectly reasonable option for many elderly patients with the condition simply to live with it and adapt their lifestyles accordingly. Readers who want a more balanced view of the options would be well advised to read *The BMJ*'s earlier article on the subject by Lurie and Tomkins-Lane.²

Competing interests: None declared.

- 1 Cole AA. Fusion for lumbar spinal stenosis? *BMJ* 2016;353:i3145. doi:10.1136/bmj.i3145 pmid:27287461.
- 2 Lurie J, Tomkins-Lane C. Management of lumbar spinal stenosis. *BMJ* 2016;352:h6234. doi:10.1136/bmj.h6234 pmid:26727925.

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