

Letters to the Editor

Comments on the Article Entitled “Clinical Effectiveness of Posterior Annular Targeted Ablative Decompression as an Alleviative Intervention for Lumbosacral Discogenic Pain: Systematic Review and Meta-analysis”

TO THE EDITOR:

With interest, I read the recently published article entitled “Clinical Effectiveness of Posterior Annular Targeted Ablative Decompression as an Alleviative Intervention for Lumbosacral Discogenic Pain: Systematic Review and Meta-analysis” by Lee et al (1). The researchers conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of the efficacy of posterior annular targeted decompression for treating lumbosacral discogenic pain in terms of pain control or functional improvement. They reviewed 12 studies and included 8 in the meta-analysis. I believe this study is meaningful, but I have an issue.

The authors stated that they included previous studies of human patients (≥ 18 years) with axial back pain supported by magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) findings of lumbosacral internal disc derangement, bulging, or a high-intensity zone. The authors wrote that they excluded studies that included patients with prominent disc herniation in MRI. However, 2 of the 12 included studies should not have been included (2,3). The An et al (2) study included rats, not humans. Also, the Kim et al (3) study included patients who were di-

agnosed with lumbar intervertebral disc herniation confirmed on MRI, who had back pain, lower-extremity radicular pain, or both. Therefore, the targeted disorder in the Kim et al. study was not discogenic back pain; rather, it was pain from lumbar intervertebral disc herniation, which aligns with the exclusion criteria of the Lee et al (1) study. Therefore, the remaining 10 studies should have been included in the Lee et al. review, while only 6 should have been included for the meta-analysis.

In conducting a systematic review or meta-analysis, it is essential to rigorously adhere to the study inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion of studies that should not have been included can compromise a study's credibility.

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