



Work injuries, Sports Medicine & Rehabilitation

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LUMBAR SPINE IMPAIRMENT

Definition of terms:

Muscle spasm-muscle guarding –

Asymmetric loss of spinal motion –

Non-verifiable/verifiable radiculopathy –

Reflexes/sensory loss/atrophy –

EMG/NCV –

Alteration of motion segment integrity –

DETERMINING APPROPRIATE METHOD OF ASSESSMENT OF IMPAIRMENT:

DRE (diagnosis related estimates) is the principal methodology used to evaluate an individual who has had a distinct **injury**.

ROM (range of motion) method is used in several situations:

1. when an impairment is not caused by an injury
2. multi-level involvement in the same spinal region
3. alteration of motion segment integrity at multiple levels
4. recurrent radiculopathy caused by a new disk or recurrent disk in the same spinal region

DIAGNOSIS RELATED ESTIMATES (DRE): Patient at MMI.

DRE Category I (0% impairment):

DRE Category II (5-8 % whole person impairment): ADL/Pain above level of impairment

DRE Category III (10-13% whole person impairment):

DRE Category IV (20-23 % whole person impairment):

DRE Category V (25-28 % whole person impairment):

ROM METHOD: Patient at MMI.

1. Use of **inclinometer** in determining ROM (3 consecutive measurements)

2. **Specific spine disorders**

3. Determine impairment due to sensory loss Table 15-15, pg. 424. Loss of power/motor deficit, Table 15-16, pg. 424.

4. **Combine** above whole person impairments as per pg. 604, AMA Guides, 5th Edition.

ALMARAZ/GUZMAN

ALMARAZ/GUZMAN I: An impairment rating strictly based on AMA Guides is rebutted by showing that such an impairment rating would result in a permanent disability reward that would be inequitable, disproportionate, and not a fair and accurate measure of the employee's permanent disability. Repealed.

ALMARAZ/GUZMAN II: Impairment rating may be arrived at by making comparisons and drawing analogies to scheduled ratings within the four corners of the AMA Guides: Anthony Ferras vs. United Airlines.