

## **Return to work status after SI joint fusion in the worker's compensation population.**

### **Introduction**

Increased attention has been placed on the role of the sacroiliac (SI) joint as a pain generator and cause of low back pain. Increasing amounts of data have demonstrated improved clinical outcomes in well selected patients with SI joint fusion. Little research has focused on the clinical outcomes for SI joint fusion in the worker's compensation population.

### **Methods**

We performed a retrospective chart review of 15 consecutive worker's compensation patients that were treated with an SI fusion. We recorded time to first return to work as well as time to return to full duty status.

### **Results**

15 patients had unilateral treatment and 1 patient ultimately underwent bilateral treatment for separate claims 30 months apart. Average time to

return to work with restrictions was 55 (14-98) days. 5 patients ultimately returned to work full duty. Patients that returned to work full-duty returned an average of 94 (76-112) days after surgery. 8 patients returned to work with permanent restrictions. 1 patient was unable to return to work after the procedure. 1 patient was lost to follow-up.

### **Discussion**

SI fusion has the potential to improve the quality of life of patients suffering from low back pain. As with any other procedure, proper patient selection is paramount to ensure an excellent clinical outcome. To our knowledge this is the only study to review the return to work time after SI joint fusion in the worker's compensation population.