

Return to work status after cervical disc replacement in the worker's compensation population.

Introduction

Cervical disc replacement is an option for patients experiencing neck and arm pain and offers unique benefits relevant to the worker's compensation population. Increasingly, data from the general population have demonstrated excellent outcomes for cervical disc replacement surgery when compared to traditional anterior cervical discectomy and fusion (ACDF). Little research has focused on the clinical outcomes for cervical disc replacement in the worker's compensation population, specifically regarding return to work time.

Methods

We performed a retrospective chart review of 13 consecutive worker's compensation patients that were treated with cervical disc replacement surgery. Demographic information and return to work time was recorded for both light duty and full duty.

Results

9 male and 4 female patients were reviewed. 9 patients had one-level

disc replacement and 4 had two-level disc replacement. No patients had cervical surgery prior to the disc replacement. Average age at the time of surgery was 43.2. Average time to return to work with restrictions was 60.5 (34-182) days. Average time to return to work without restrictions was 69.9 (43-92) days. Two patients continued to work with permanent restrictions. Two patients required conversion to ACDF.

Discussion

Cervical disc replacement has the potential to improve the quality of life of patients suffering from neck and arm pain and offers unique benefits compared to cervical fusion surgery including more rapid recovery rate and faster return to work. As with any procedure, proper patient selection is paramount to ensure an excellent clinical outcome. To our knowledge this is the only study to review return to work status after cervical disc replacement in the worker's compensation population.