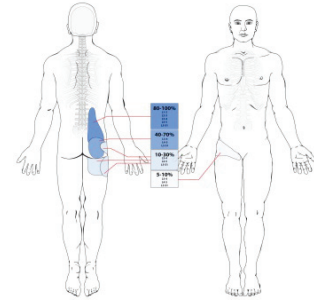


Lumbar Facet Pain Pattern



- Neurophysiologic studies have shown that lumbar facet-joint capsules are a source of pain.¹
- Fukui et al.² established pain patterns for the lumbar facet joints:
- There is a large overlap where the lumbar facet joints cause pain. However, it is also important to note where facet joints do not cause pain.
- The diagram shows where joints most commonly cause pain.
- Lumbar facet pain typically cause:
 - Parasagittal lumbar and buttock pain (40-70%), lateral hip (10-30%) and occasionally posterior thigh (10-30%) and groin pain (5-10%).
 - Do not/rarely cause midline lumbar pain or lower leg pain.
 - Do not cross to the other side.
 - Can be unilateral pain (from joints on one side of the spine) or bilateral (pain from both sides of the spine).
- When pain is chronic or severe, the pain can extend beyond these pain patterns.
- Facet joints do not have to show degeneration on diagnostic imaging to be painful. This is usually due to a joint sprain (synovitis).
- Facet joints that do show degeneration on diagnostic imaging can be either a joint sprain (synovitis) or degeneration (arthrosis) or both.
- Consider that the patient may have more than one pain generator.

1. Cavanaugh JM, Lu Y, Chen C, Kallakuri S. Pain generation in lumbar and cervical facet joints. *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery, American Volume*. 2006 Apr;88. Suppl 2:63-7.
2. Fukui S, Ohseto K, Shiotani M, Ohno K, Karasawa H, Naganuma Y. Distribution of Referred Pain From the Lumbar Zygapophyseal Joints and Dorsal Rami. *The Clinical Journal of Pain*. 1997; 13: 303-307.
3. Sizer PS Jr, Phelps V, Matthijs O. Pain generators of the lumbar spine. *Pain Pract*. 2001;1(3):255-273.