

Complex spinal pain

Several pain sources can overlap. A clear diagnosis guides your care.

What does complex mean?

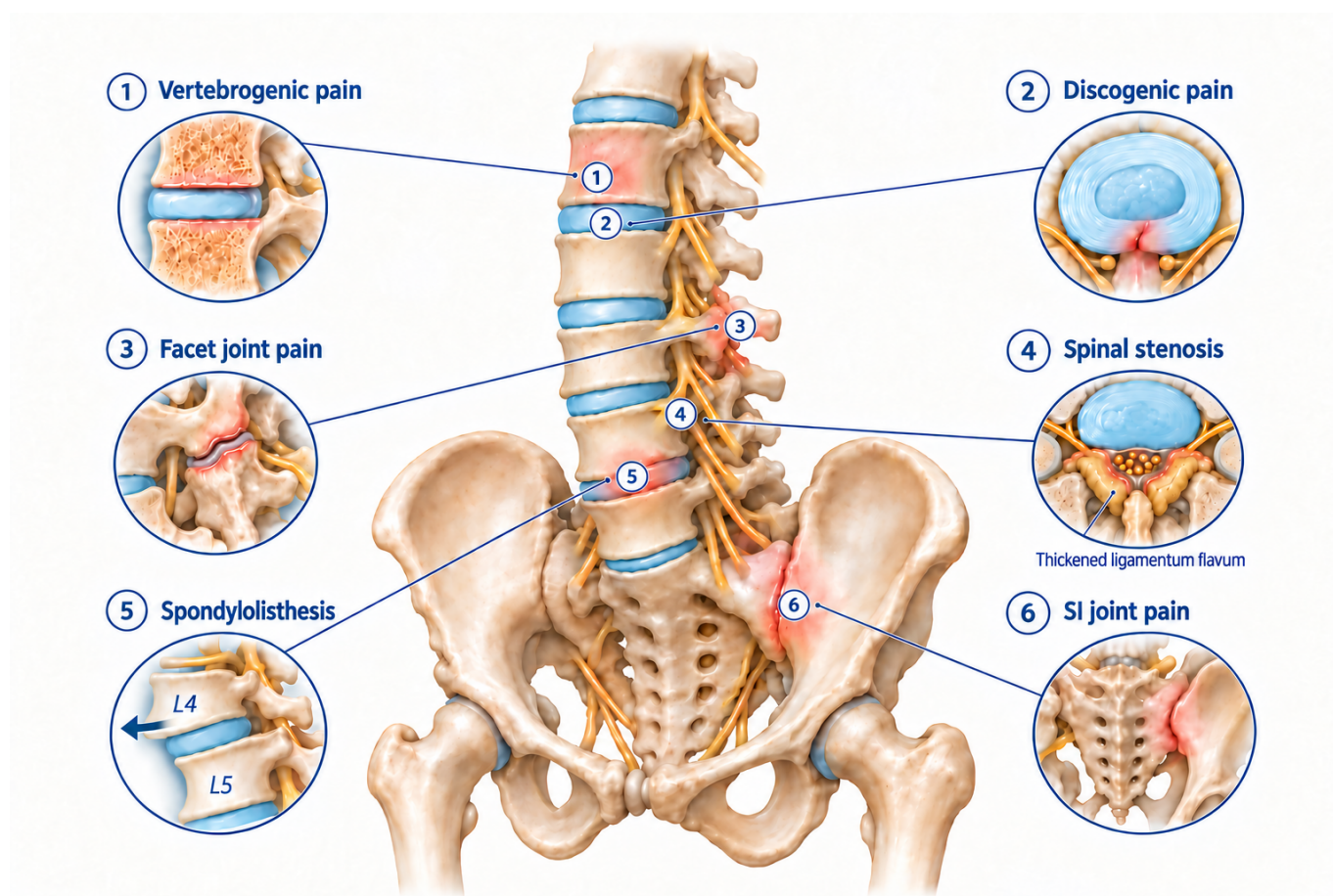
Pain may involve discs, vertebral endplates, joints, nerves, and supporting tissues. More than one source may contribute, and each can need a different approach.

A scan is part of the picture

An MRI or X-ray may show several changes. Not every finding causes pain. Your symptoms, examination, and imaging need to be considered together.

Treat the source. Restore function.

The goal is to identify the main contributors, choose treatment in a thoughtful sequence, and help you move, sleep, and participate in daily life more comfortably.



Understanding the sources

A treatment plan built around your symptoms and goals.

1 Vertebrogenic pain

Pain arising from the endplates of the vertebral bones. Certain MRI changes may support this diagnosis when they fit your symptoms.

2 Discogenic pain

Pain arising from an intervertebral disc. Disc degeneration or a tear can contribute, but imaging alone does not establish the cause.

3 Facet joint pain

Pain from the small joints at the back of the spine. A diagnostic medial branch block may help assess whether these joints are contributing.

4 Spinal stenosis

Narrowing around the nerves can affect standing and walking. Thickened ligamentum flavum may contribute to this narrowing.

5 Spondylolisthesis

One vertebra slips forward relative to the one below it. Symptoms depend on whether the slip causes instability, nerve narrowing, or other painful changes.

6 SI joint pain

The sacroiliac joints connect the spine and pelvis. They can cause low back or buttock pain and may be assessed with specific examination tests and an injection.

Your next step

Review your symptom pattern and previous treatments with your clinician. Care may combine rehabilitation, medicines, and selected procedures. Choose measurable goals and reassess the response before the next treatment.



Reza S. Roghani, MD, PhD

Assistant Professor
Interventional Spine and Pain

Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
School of Medicine

443-997-5476 Appointments
410-614-4033 Fax
410-502-2199 Procedures

Appointments

443-997-5476

Johns Hopkins Medicine

General education; individual evaluation is required.