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Spurling's test

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The **Spurling test** is a medical maneuver used to assess nerve root pain (aka radicular pain). The examiner turns the patient's head to the affected side while extending and applying downward pressure to the top of the patient's head. A positive **Spurling's sign** (i.e. the Spurling's test is positive) is when the pain arising in the neck radiates in the direction of the corresponding dermatome ipsilaterally. It is a variant of the foraminal compression test (cervical compression test).

Patients with a cervical radiculopathy (compression of a nerve 'root' in the neck) can present with a variety of symptoms, including pain, numbness and weakness. Many other disorders can produce similar symptoms. In addition to the clinical history, the neurological examination may show signs suggesting a cervical radiculopathy.

Accuracy

Spurling's test is somewhat specific when used for individuals with an abnormal electromyogram study and is relatively sensitive physical examination maneuver in diagnosing cervical spondylosis or acute cervical (neck)radiculopathy. It is not a very sensitive test when used for individuals without classic radicular signs suggestive of cervical radiculopathy. In 2011, one study evaluated 257 patients with clinical cervical radiculopathy and correlatedCT scan findings with clinical exam findings using the Spurling's test. The Spurling's test was 95% sensitive and 94% specific for diagnosing nerve root pathology.^[1]

References

- Shabat, Shay; Leitner, Yossi; David, Rami; Folman, Yoram (September 2011). "The Correlation between Spurling Test and Imaging Studies in Detecting Cervical Radiculopathy". *Journal of Neuroimaging* **22**: 375–378. doi:10.1111/j.1552-6569.2011.00644.x. PMID 21883627.

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