Intervertebral disc (IVD) degeneration can be described as a loss of proper stability and mobility which are the two major roles of the disc. Etiology and pathophysiology of disc degeneration are still largely unknown. [1,2] Although the cause of IVD degeneration remains unclear, an attempt to define IVD degeneration was recently made as follows: an aberrant, cell-mediated response to progressive structural failure. [3]

Degenerative disc disease (DDD) applies to degenerated discs which are also painful.[3] DDD is a highly common musculoskeletal impairment that currently has no identified cause. A strong association exists between increasing age and progressive degradation. [4,5] The traditional view has been that DDD is primarily due to physical (over)loading as well as changes associated with the normal aging process. In recent years, however, advances have been made in the understanding of risk factors such as age, gender, genetic, environmental, chemical (smoking), and biomechanical influences for disc degeneration.[6-9]

As symptomatic disc degeneration is often believed to be a common cause of chronic low back pain it should be emphasized that back pain may not necessarily be correlated or associated with morphologic or biomechanical changes in the disc.[10] Further workup should be initiated to determine the mechanism of pain in patients with disc degeneration.