

DOCTOR SAYS

Get an MRI scan to rule out nerve compression

Sciatica usually refers to symptoms which simulate pain down the sciatic nerve distribution – in other words, down the leg.

Therefore, I assume that you are referring to pain down the right leg, rather than the entire right side of your body.

If so, X-ray scans, though helpful in viewing bony structures – as you have rightly pointed out about the scoliotic deformity and sacralisation of the vertebra – are actually not useful for observing the spinal discs and neural elements of the body.

For that, you would require a

magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan. I recommend that you get an MRI for two reasons – first, it has been nine months since the pain occurred; second, it would be helpful to rule out a nerve compression if you indeed suffer from sciatica.

This is because the lumbar scoliosis, unless it is severe, may not contribute much to sciatica symptoms. Similarly, sacralisation usually is not symptomatic.

The MRI scan will therefore help to check if there is indeed nerve compression in the spinal canal, resulting in a true sciatica condition,

where the pain down your leg arises from a nerve compression, or a pinched nerve. This is where there is physical pressure on a nerve, which can then trigger a painful sensation, inflammation or numbness.

However, if you have sciatica from a disc protrusion, it is usually curable once that problematic disc is removed and the mechanical compression on the nerve has been relieved.

The type of rehabilitative treatment recommended depends largely on a correct diagnosis.

Mild sciatica sometimes gets better through physiotherapy and rehabilitation.

However, with such a chronic nine-month duration of your

symptoms, it is unlikely you will get better with just rehabilitation.

Finally, the issue of the morning joint stiffness of the index finger is probably unrelated to the sciatica condition. Most often, patients with such a problem have trigger finger, which can feel stiff or painful.

Another condition that might be causing finger stiffness is arthritis. These ailments are easily diagnosed with a doctor's consultation and imaging studies, if required.



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