Month 112 — Lumbar MRI Update

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March 11, 2020 By Dan Zeller

The results of the MRI that I had two weeks ago to check out my back are in, and it confirmed what I already knew from previous MRIs for the injury, with a few bits of new information.

I knew that I had bulging discs between L3-L4, L4-L5, and L5-S1, but this new report revealed that I also have a mild bulge between L2-L3. In other words, my lumbar region is a mess.

This report, however, identified the likely source of my sciatica and pain. “Disc bulge with superimposed focal right subarticular disc protrusion which contacts and displaces the traversing right S1 nerve root against the enlarged facet.” Yippee! It continues, “Contact/compression of the traversing right S1 nerve root at the L5-S1 level from a focal right subarticular/lateral recess disc protrusion is likely the cause of the patient’s right-sided symptoms.” You don’t say?!?

One positive note about the report is the omission of any discussion of metastasis to the spine. Of course, I’m not sure that an MRI is the best tool to pick up any metastasis unless it’s pretty advanced. Still, I’ll take it.

So what are we going to do about the pinched nerve? I don’t know. My doctor and I have been playing phone tag at the end of last week, so once we connect, we can discuss options.

The Coronavirus/COVID-19 has had an impact on how the VA medical facilities are doing business. They just issued guidance on who can enter their facilities, pretty severely restricting access and encouraging patients to conduct their consults with their physicians by phone or video conferencing if at all possible. That makes sense to me, as long as there isn’t an inordinate delay in connecting. Of course, if you still need to be poked and prodded by your physician, you can still go in as long as you pass the COVID-19 screening and follow the protocols.

In the meanwhile, I’ll just keep hobbling along and wait for my PSA test in late June.

Stay healthy and wash your hands! A lot!!

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