More attention to child's back pain

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Complaint of back pain in a child or adolescent is a serious problem that needs more attention by physicians. Most of child’s back pain have nonspecific cause but sometimes associated with a certain condition such as tumor, curvature of the spine (Kyphosis or scoliosis), a broken spinal bone, inflammation, or infection.

There are several red flag warning signs that may suggest a specific cause for back pain such as constant pain, night pain, pain accompanied by fever or weight loss, leg weakness, walking with a limp, bowel and bladder problems or pains that spread into the buttocks or legs.

Often we can determine the most likely cause of a child's back pain according history and physical exam. But sometimes, especially when serious causes are suspected, blood tests and x-rays or other imaging tests such as CT scan, MRI or bone scan are needed. A biopsy of the spine may be required if an infection or tumor is found.

The treatment of back pain is individualized for each child, depending on his/her diagnosis; most treatment for back pain in children is non-surgical (change in activity, rest, trunk strengthening and postural exercises). Specific causes such as tumor and infection need specific treatment (medication therapy and surgical excision).