


# Baastrup Disease:

## Mimicking Treatment Resistant Facet Mediated Axial Low Back Pain

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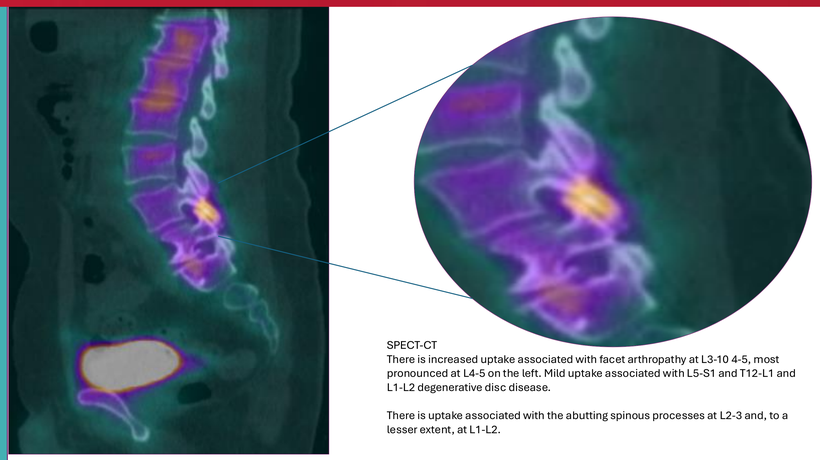
## Introduction:

Baastrup Disease also known as “kissing spine syndrome” is a spinal condition where adjacent lumbar spinous processes begin to approximate and make contact [2], often associated with degenerative disk disease and other age-related processes of the spine. [1]

## Case:

- **Patient:** 73 yo male presenting as a transfer of care with chief complaint of medial back pain. His pain is persistent, originally only present at night when lying flat on his back.
- **Physical Exam:** Tenderness to palpation of medial spine, pain with facet joint loading, pain worse with extension, improved with flexion.
- **Imaging:** MRI in 2020 showed significant lumbar facet hypertrophy and anterolisthesis. Review of additional imaging demonstrated an MRI obtained in 2023 revealing significant lumbar facet hypertrophy at the L3-L4 and L4-L5, raising concern for facet-mediated pain.
- **Interventions:** Following completion of a course of physical therapy without improvement, the patient underwent diagnostic medial branch blocks (MBB) in March 2025 and April 2025 at levels L3-4 -5, each resulting in temporary significant pain relief.
- Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA) was subsequently performed at these levels however without improvement of symptoms.

**BAASTRUP DISEASE** CONTINUES TO BE **UNDERDIAGNOSED** AND WHY IT SHOULD **REMAIN** ON YOUR **DIFFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS.**



SPECT-CT
There is increased uptake associated with facet arthropathy at L3-10 4-5, most pronounced at L4-5 on the left. Mild uptake associated with L5-S1 and T12-L1 and L1-L2 degenerative disc disease.

There is uptake associated with the abutting spinous processes at L2-3 and, to a lesser extent, at L1-L2.

**Repeat Imaging and Conclusion:**

- Given RFA failure and patient frustration, SPECT CT performed to evaluate for boney abnormality not captured on previous MRIs.
- Diagnosis of Baastrup Disease is made, a discussion was had with patient regarding next steps .

## Discussion:

The results of the SPECT CT reinforces the idea that in patients with intractable mid to lower back pain following appropriate medical management can have other diagnoses. Baastrup Disease continues to be underdiagnosed and should remain on the differential diagnosis for intractable non-radiating lower back pain.

**References**

1) Hu H, Wu C, Li H, Li T. Imaging characteristics and correlation analysis of lumbar spondylolisthesis with Baastrup's disease. *J Clin Neurosci*. 2025;139:111474. doi:10.1016/j.jocn.2025.111474.

2) OrthoVellum Medical Education Team. Baastrup disease (kissing spine syndrome). OrthoVellum. Published September 15, 2026. Accessed October 1, 2026.