Can Axialif Be Believed as a Safe Procedure to the Rectum?
*M.P. Matzner*, A. Stift, P. Krepler, S. Winkler, J.G. Grohs

*M.P. Matzner*¹, A. Stift², P. Krepler¹, S. Winkler³, J.G. Grohs¹

¹Medical University Vienna, Orthopaedics, Vienna, Austria, ²Medical University Vienna, Surgery, Vienna, Austria, ³Medical University Vienna, Internal Medicine, Subdivision Infections, Vienna, Austria

**Purpose:** In Medline there is just one report on rectal injury by using the pararectal AxiaLIF approach. We report a case series of patients who have been fused using the rather new AxialIF technique. FDA files also give a steadily changing number on these injuries. This case series reports patients operated on out of the roughly 200 cases done in Austria (figures given by TranS1 in September 2010).

**Methods:** All 5 patients we report have undergone AxialIF fusion at various other facilities. All those patients suffered from obvious rectal injury. None of the patients had previous rectal surgery. All patients suffered of local discitis. Besides that they suffered of pneumonia, sepsis and loosening. Age was mean 63, 3 male, 2 female patients had to be included.

**Summary:** All patients had to undergo long term antibiotic treatment including local reoperations in 3 cases, while treatment by casting and/or bed rest was successful in 2 cases; in terms of the rectal injuries 3 were successfully treated conservatively, 2 received a colostomy. One patient suffered from septic aortic aneurysm. A full recovery could not be achieved in any of those patients. Besides these outline facts further data will be presented.

**Conclusion:** Out of our case series and the FDA database we conclude that with the current technique the pararectal approach is a questionable safe one to the rectum. Other troubles in this approach were not addressed by this study but are evident. In respect to all what is known we therefore call for a proper and honest work-up of all those cases worldwide to understand the pros and cons of this approach.