

Supplementary Table 1. Classification of disc degeneration

Grade	structure	Distinction of nucleus and annulus	Disc height
I	Homogeneous, bright white	Clear	Normal
II	Inhomogeneous	Clear	Normal
III	Inhomogeneous, gray	Unclear	Normal to slightly decreased
IV	Inhomogeneous, gray or black	Lost	Normal to moderately decreased
V	Inhomogeneous, black	Lost	Collapsed disc space