

AWARD NUMBER: W81XWH-13-2-0043

TITLE: Lumbar Spine Musculoskeletal Physiology and Biomechanics During Simulated Military Operations

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Samuel R. Ward PT

CONTRACTING ORGANIZATION: University of California, San Diego  
La Jolla, CA 92093

REPORT DATE: June 2015

TYPE OF REPORT: Annual

PREPARED FOR: U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command  
Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE June 2015		2. REPORT TYPE Annual		3. DATES COVERED 1 Jun 2014 - 31 May 2015	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Lumbar Spine Musculoskeletal Physiology and Biomechanics During Simulated Military Operations				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER W81XWH-13-2-0043	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
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				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) University of California, San Diego 9500 Gilman Drive Dept 621 La Jolla, CA 32039-0621				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT  Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT This study evaluated the relationship between 3D geometry of the lumbar spine, under different loading conditions and positions, and the pathophysiology of the intervertebral disc and lumbar trunk muscles. 42 Marines were scanned using upright MRI in a normal standing position, and in simulated operational conditions wearing PPE (n=30; weight=11.4kg), or scanned wearing load (22kg, 33kg, 45kg) distributed 20/80 or 50/50 anterior/posterior (n=12). 28 Marines were scanned in a high-resolution 3T MRI scanner to quantify muscle quality and IVD degeneration. Lumbar lordosis significantly decreases at all levels except L1L2 when sitting. Even anterior/posterior distribution of load maintains whole lumbar lordosis as load increases. Subjects with IVD degeneration at L4L5 had muscle volume differences.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Spine, Lumbar, Kinematics, Muscle Architecture, Low Back Pain, Position					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT  UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES  20	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON USAMRMC
a. REPORT Unclassified	b. ABSTRACT Unclassified	c. THIS PAGE Unclassified			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)

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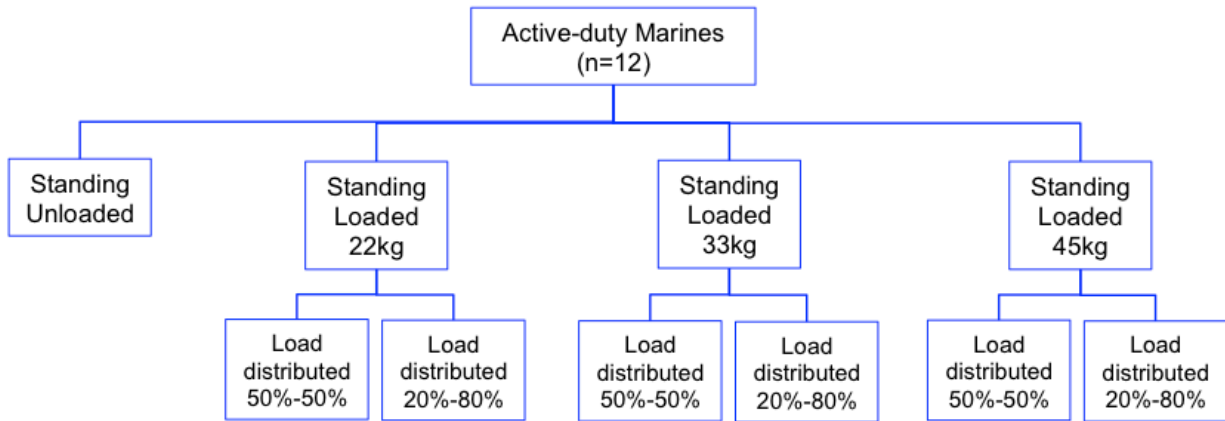
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1. **INTRODUCTION:** The weights of loads carried into battle pose an injury and performance problem for the US Marines. Marine Corps assault loads range from 44kg for the rifleman to 61kg for the squad leader. These are well in excess of the recommended assault load of 22.7kg; 30% of body weight. Two things are clear: (1) Marines routinely carry more weight than the recommended limit, and (2) the Veterans Administration shows an increasing trend in disabilities related to lower back injury as a result of carrying excessive loads in operational environments. We have implemented new MRI technologies enabling quantification of lumbar spine kinematics under simulated march conditions. From these investigations, we have observed a large number (37.5%) of Marines with some evidence of disc pathology. However, it is unclear if these disc changes, or the expected concomitant muscle changes, are related to kinematic changes in the lumbar spine. Further, it is not known whether pre-existing disc pathology predicts future injury and service life in U.S. Marines. Our central hypothesis is that lumbar disc and muscle degeneration alters the kinematic response of the lumbar spine to functional positions and loads, predisposing individuals to injury.
2. **KEYWORDS:** Spine, Lumbar, Kinematics, Muscle Architecture, Low Back Pain, Position
3. **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**
  - **What were the major goals of the project?**
  - Major Goal 1: To compare lumbar spine kinematics in simulated operational conditions in Marines with measurable lumbar disc pathology
    - Task 1-Approved IRB Protocols
      - Local IRB Approvals
        - Due: 01 August 2013
        - Completed: 100%
      - HRPO Approvals
        - Due: 01 August 2013
        - Completed: 100%
    - Task 2-Subject battalions identified and coordinated
      - Subjects 1-33 recruited, consented and scheduled
        - Due: 01 February 2014
        - Completed: 100%
      - Subjects 34-66 recruited, consented and scheduled
        - Due: 01 August 2014
        - Completed: 24%
      - Subjects 67-100 recruited, consented and scheduled
        - Due: 01 Jan 2015
        - Completed: 0%

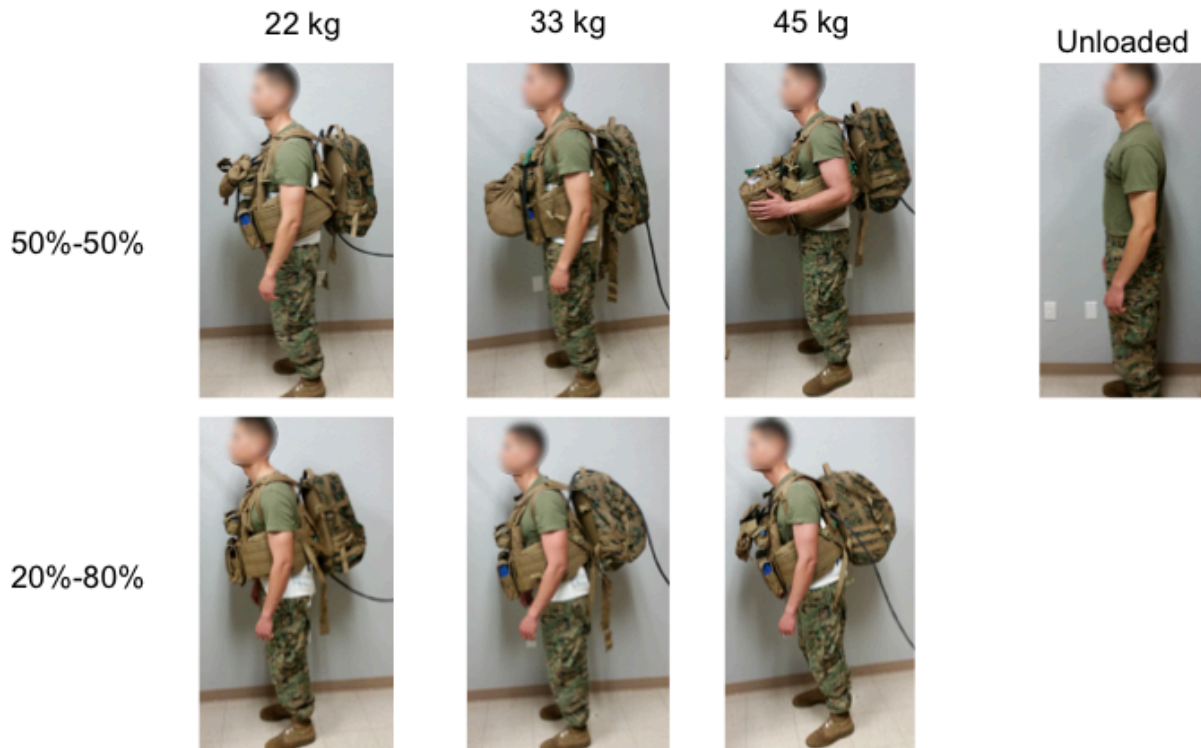
- Task 3-Data Collection/Analysis
  - Vertical data acquisition
    - Due: 01 December 2015
    - Completed: 42%
  - Vertical data analysis
    - Due: 01 February 2016
    - Completed: 42%
- Major Goal 2: To quantify changes in lumbar spine muscle architecture in Marines with measurable lumbar disc pathology.
  - Task 1-Approved IRB Protocols
    - Local IRB Approvals
      - Due: 01 August 2013
      - Completed: 100%
    - HRPO Approvals
      - Due: 01 August 2013
      - Completed: 100%
  - Task 2-Subject battalions identified and coordinated
    - Subjects 1-33 recruited, consented and scheduled
      - Due: 01 February 2014
      - Completed: 91%
    - Subjects 34-66 recruited, consented and scheduled
      - Due: 01 August 2014
      - Completed: 0%
    - Subjects 67-100 recruited, consented and scheduled
      - Due: 01 Jan 2015
      - Completed: 0%
  - Task 3-Data Collection/Analysis
    - Supine data acquisition
      - Due: 01 December 2015
      - Completed: 30%
    - Supine data analysis
      - Due: 01 February 2016
      - Completed: 30%
- **What was accomplished under these goals?**
  - Currently, we are behind stated goals on number of subjects recruited, consented and scheduled. After collecting upright and supine MRI images from the first 30 subjects, we decided to process all data to preliminarily determine whether or not we see and major differences between subjects

with/without back pain and with/without lumbar disc degeneration. We currently do not have the power required to detect significant differences between groups, but have identified trends in the data. We have determined that we need to scan more subjects in order to properly answer this question.

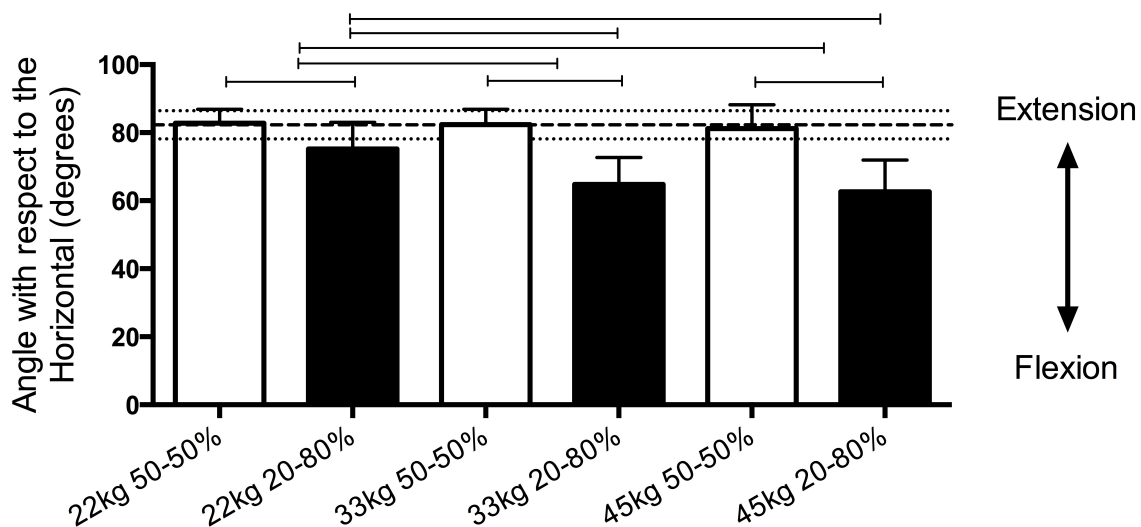
- During this last reporting period 12 Marines were scanned in an upright MRI machine in their normal standing position (StU; no load), and under 3 different load magnitudes (22kg, 33g, 45kg) and 2 different load distributions (50/50 and 20/80, anterior/posterior). Digital seed points were manually placed on the corners and the posterior elements of each vertebra using OsiriX. The location of the seed points were imported into Matlab and used to define an endplate-based joint coordinate system applied to the superior and inferior endplate of each vertebra.



**Figure 1. Schematic outlining the study design. Marines were scanned under each load magnitude and load distribution in an upright MRI machine, and center of pressure was measured using a force mat in a structure with the dimensions of the MRI scanner.**



**Figure 2.** Photographs of the load distribution system used for this study. The black cable seen in the pictures is from the MRI coil.



**Figure 3.** Angle with respect to the horizontal was measured in each position to assess forward leaning angle of the whole lumbar spine. The dotted lines indicate the mean standing unloaded angle with respect to the horizontal. A decrease in angle with respect to the horizontal indicates a subject is leaning forward. A significant effect of load and distribution was found. When load is



evenly distributed, no change in forward leaning was observed. When load is distributed 20/80 anterior/posterior, subjects will lean more forward. Data shown is mean  $\pm$  STD.

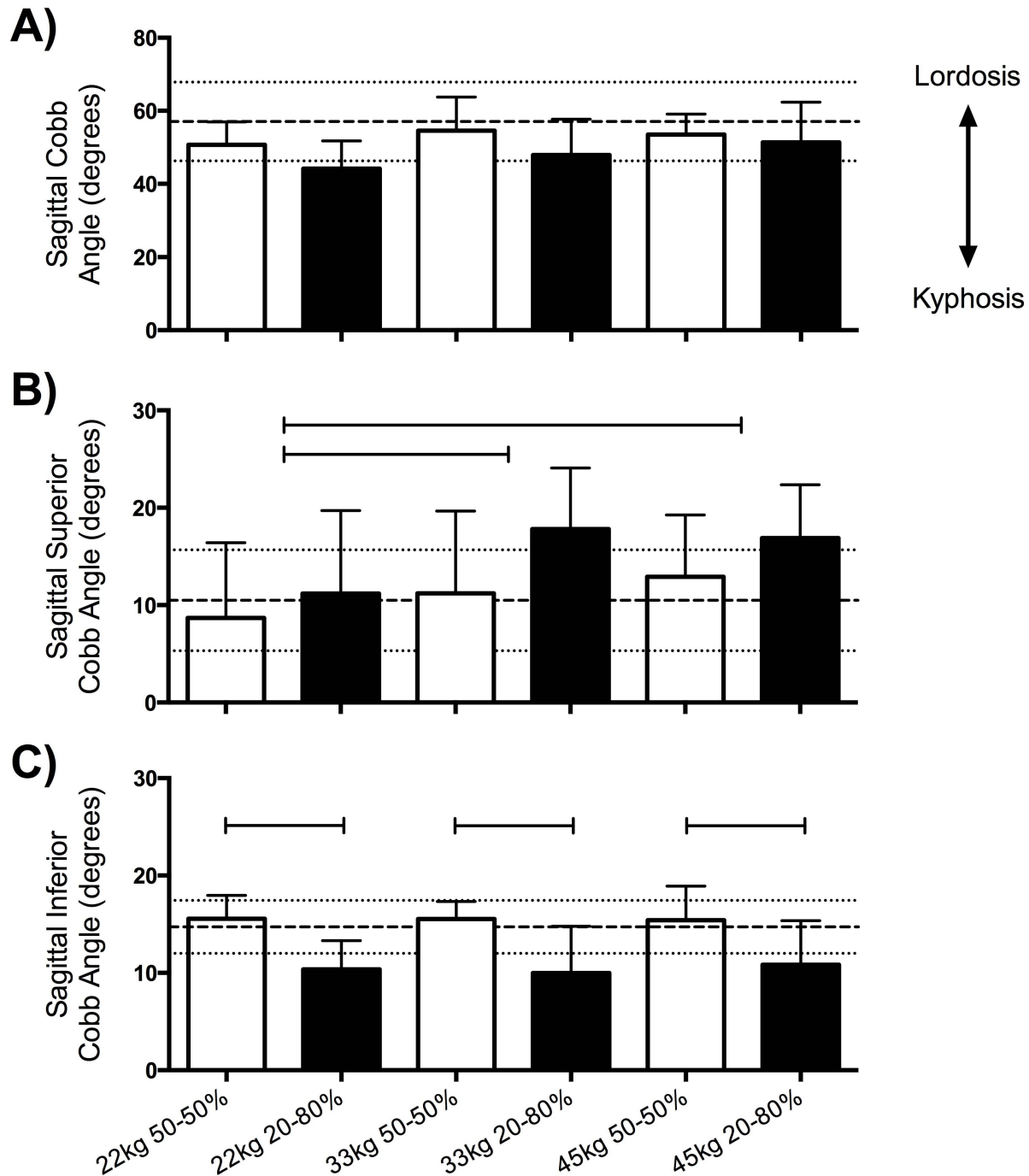
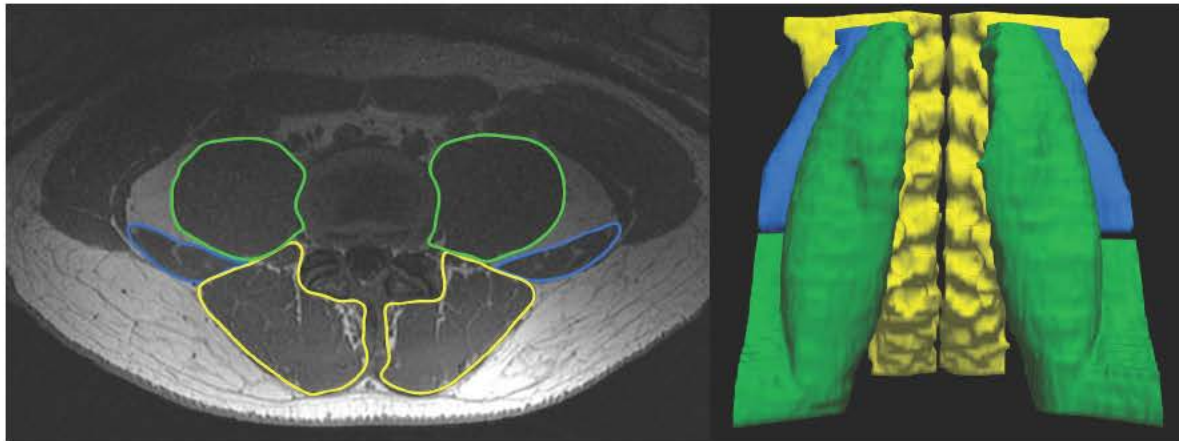


Figure 4. Cobb angle was measured in each position to assess lumbar lordosis. A.) Sagittal Cobb angle is measured from the superior endplate of L1 to the superior endplate of S1 B.) Sagittal Superior Cobb angle is measured from the superior endplate of L1 to the inferior endplate of L3 C.) Sagittal Inferior Cobb angle is measured from the superior endplate of L4 to the superior

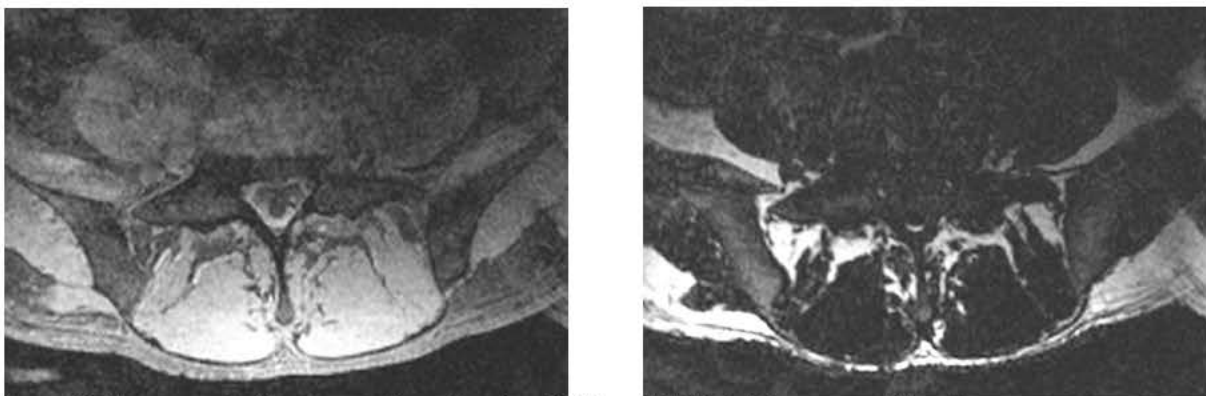


endplate of S1. As load increases, the superior lumbar spine increases lordosis when load is distributed 20/80. There is a decrease in lordosis in the inferior lumbar spine when load is distributed 20/80. Data shown is mean  $\pm$  STD.

Twenty-eight active-duty male Marines ( $27 \pm 6.9$  years of age, body weight  $81.11 \pm 11.03$  kg) were scanned using a 3T MRI scanner. Imaging protocol consisted of: anatomical scan (**Fig. 5**), fat-water separation (**Fig. 6**), and T2 map (tissue hydration; **Fig. 7**). Erector spinae and multifidus (ES+M), psoas (PS), and quadratus lumborum (QL) muscles were manually segmented (L1-S1; **Fig. 5**). Muscle volume and fat fraction were calculated by lumbar level. Average T2 values were calculated for: IVD nucleus pulposus (L1L2-L5S1), ES only, M only, and ES+M together, and epimuscular fat regions at the L4L5 level. Participants were classified into two groups: with and without degeneration at L4L5 IVD (threshold:  $T2 < 115$  msec, **Fig. 7**). Two-way (lumbar level  $\times$  L4L5 degeneration) repeated measures ANCOVA (covariate: body weight) and *post hoc* Sidak pairwise tests adjusted for multiple comparisons were conducted.



**Figure 5. (Left) Axial anatomical image of paraspinal and trunk muscles delineated per manual segmentation, and (right) Anterior view of three-dimensional reconstruction of paraspinal and trunk muscles: ES+M (yellow), PS (green), and QL (blue).**



**Figure 6. Representative examples of water (left) and fat (right) composition images.**

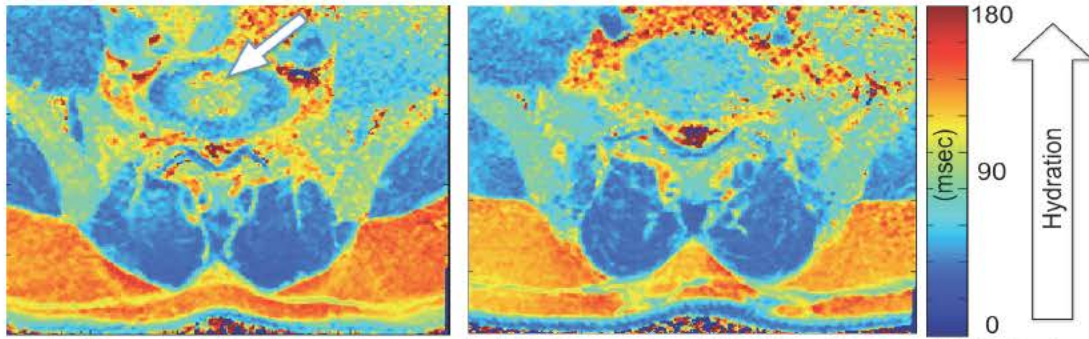


Figure 7. T2 map of (left) non-degenerated IVD (arrow) and (right) evidence of IVD desiccation.

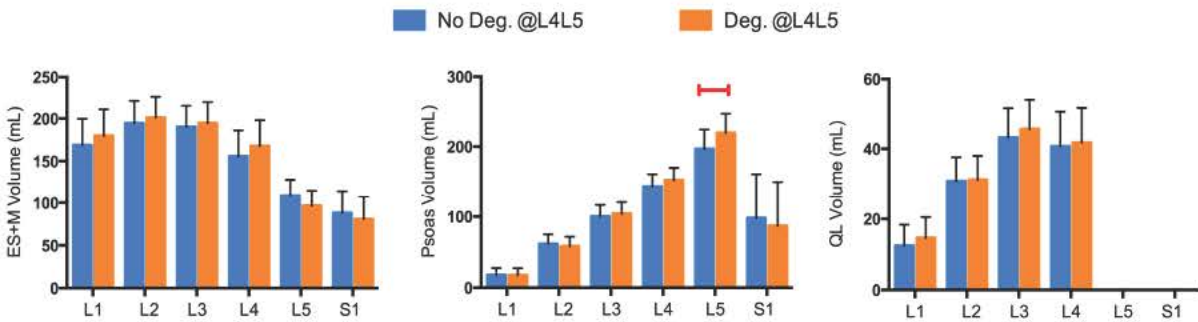


Figure 8. Results for (left) ES+M, (center) PS, and (right) QL muscles volume per level.

Horizontal red bars represent significant differences between degenerated (orange) and non-degenerated (green) L4L5 IVD groups.

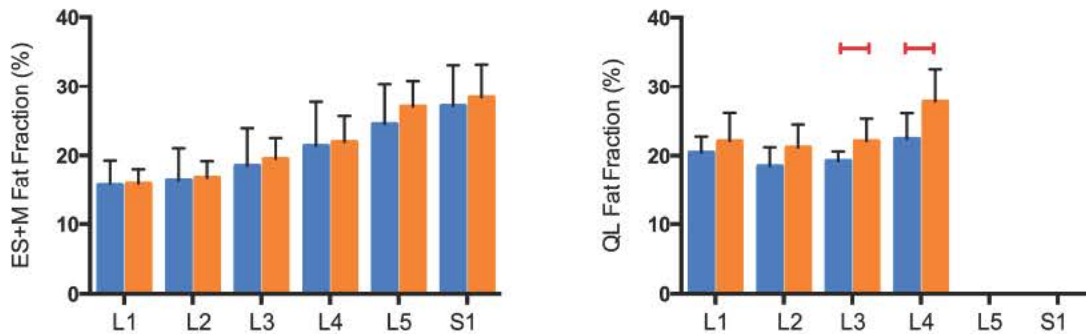


Figure 9. Results for (left) ES+M, and (right) PS muscles fat fraction per level. Horizontal red bars represent significant differences between degenerated (orange) and non-degenerated (green) L4L5 IVD groups.

- No demographic differences were found between the groups with (n=16) and without IVD degeneration. A total of 16 Marines were found to have a degeneration at the L4L5 IVD. Weight was a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) covariate for all muscle volumes, but not for muscle fat fraction. No differences were found in ES+M and QL volumes between degeneration groups (Figs. 8A and 8C). However, a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) interaction between lumbar level and degeneration was found in the PS muscle at the L5 level (Fig. 8B). No significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) differences were found in ES+M fat fraction content (Fig. 9A). Additionally, a significant main effect for degeneration was

found on the fat content in QL at the L3 and L4 lumbar levels (**Fig. 9B**). The T2 value of muscles of Marines with degenerated L4L5 IVD was not significantly different than that of those without degeneration, however ES had a significantly larger T2 value than M (Deg. L4L5:  $T2(ES+M) = 54.14 \pm 5.69$  msec,  $T2(ES) = 43.36 \pm 5.54$  msec,  $T2(M) = 37.25 \pm 2.80$  msec; No Deg. L4L5:  $T2(ES+M) = 49.66 \pm 3.31$  msec,  $T2(ES) = 41.15 \pm 5.25$  msec,  $T2(M) = 35.15 \pm 2.31$  msec).

- **What opportunities for training and professional development has the project provided?**
  - Nothing to report
- **How were the results disseminated to communities of interest?**
  - Results from this study were presented at the Military Health Research Conference (Ft Lauderdale, FL; August 2014) and the Orthopaedic Research Society Annual Meeting (Las Vegas, NV; March 2015)
- **What do you plan to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals?**
  - During the next reporting period, we intend on scanning 58 more Marines in both the upright and supine MRI scanners. To date, we have scanned 42 in the upright MRI and 30 in the supine MRI with 2 subjects dropping out of the study due to claustrophobia inside the machine. We will be analyzing the relationship between lumbar muscle physiology and lumbar spine kinematics data we have collected to date. We currently have three manuscripts in preparation for this study, which we intend on submitting in the next year.

#### 4. **IMPACT:**

- **What was the impact on the development of the principal discipline(s) of the project?**
  - The results of this study may inform a set of load carriage guidelines to be put in place, through changes in training practices, gear design and/or implementation of exercises to strengthen the musculature of the spine. Additionally, the results of this study will allow researchers to better relate the complex 3D geometry of the lumbar spine in subjects with different levels of lumbar disc and degeneration and muscle health. The role of idiopathic lumbar back pain on lumbar spine kinematics will also allow us to investigate differences in the shape of the lumbar spine between a wide range of positions.
- **What was the impact on other disciplines?**
  - Nothing to report
- **What was the impact on technology transfer?**
  - Nothing to report
- **What was the impact on society beyond science and technology?**
  - The broad impact is that the load recommendations determined from this study can be applied to anyone who works with their spine under awkward or loaded positions.

#### 5. **CHANGES/PROBLEMS:**

- **Changes in approach and reasons for change**
  - Nothing to report

- **Actual or anticipated problems or delays and actions or plans to resolve them**
- No adverse events occurred during the last reporting period. However, one adverse event has occurred during this study: one subject experiences peripheral nerve stimulation and claustrophobia in the supine scanner (19/02/2014). He was immediately removed from the scanner and calmed down. For this subject, kinematic but not anatomical supine data was acquired.
- **Changes that had a significant impact on expenditures**
  - Nothing to report
- **Significant changes in use or care of human subjects, vertebrate animals, biohazards, and/or select agents**
  - Nothing to report
- **Significant changes in use or care of human subjects**
  - Nothing to report
- **Significant changes in use or care of vertebrate animals.**
  - Nothing to report
- **Significant changes in use of biohazards and/or select agents**
  - Nothing to report

#### 6. **PRODUCTS:**

- **Publications, conference papers, and presentations**
  - Berry DB, Rodriguez-Soto AE, Gombatto S, Jaworski R, Kelly K, Ward SR. "Lumbar Spine Postures in Marines During Simulated Operational Conditions." Military Health Research Conference: Ft Lauderdale: 2014.
  - Rodriguez-Soto AE, Stambaugh JR, Su J, Berry DB, Gombatto SP, Palombo L, Kelly KR, Ward SR. "Spinal Muscle Quality Changes in Physically Active Individuals with Disc Degeneration." Orthopaedic Research Society Annual Meeting: Las Vegas, NV: 2015.
- **Journal publications.**
  - Nothing to report
- **Books or other non-periodical, one-time publications.**
  - Nothing to report
- **Other publications, conference papers, and presentations.**
  - Nothing to report
- **Website(s) or other Internet site(s)**
  - Nothing to report
- **Technologies or techniques**
  - Nothing to report
- **Inventions, patent applications, and/or licenses**
  - Nothing to report
- **Other Products**

- Nothing to report.

## 7. PARTICIPANTS & OTHER COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

- What individuals have worked on the project?

Name:	David Berry
Project Role:	Graduate Student
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	0000-0001-8275-8322
Nearest person month worked:	12
Contribution to Project:	<i>Mr. Berry has participated in upright MRI data collection, data analysis and interpretation of results</i>
Funding Support:	
Name:	Ana Rodriguez-Soto
Project Role:	Graduate Student
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	0000-0002-9544-547X
Nearest person month worked:	12
Contribution to Project:	<i>Ms. Rodriguez-Soto has participated in supine data collection, data analysis and interpretation of results</i>
Funding Support:	UC MEXUS-CONACYT Doctoral Fellowship Cohort 2010

Name:	Dr. Sara Gombatto PT, PhD
Project Role:	Project Advisor
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	0000-0002-8284-4789
Nearest person month worked:	3
Contribution to Project:	<i>Dr. Gombatto has assisted with upright MRI data collection and interpretation of results</i>
Funding Support:	University Grants Program, San Diego State
Name:	Dr. Karen Kelly PT, PhD
Project Role:	Primary Investigator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	0000-0001-8003-6123
Nearest person month worked:	6
Contribution to Project:	<i>Dr. Kelly has assisted with subject recruitment, subject scheduling, subject consent, and interpretation of results</i>
Funding Support:	<p>Award #new award                      03/01/2015-09/30/2016 2.4 calendar Office of Navy Research Program Evaluation of SEAL Delivery Vehicles Unit Level Training The primary aim of this project is to describe the physiological, physical, cognitive and sleep changes that occur during unit level training in a specialized military operational specialty.</p> <p>Award #N1421                      10/01/2014-09/30/2015 2.4 calendar Army Special Operation Command Validating Gender-Neutral Standards for Army Special Forces (SFAS) and Ranger (RASP) Selection The primary aims of this project are (1) To determine whether the selection criteria for entry into SFAS/RASP training are accurate predictors of success during SFAS/RASP training; and (2) To establish task-dependent selection and training criteria, which could then be viewed as “gender neutral,” thus meeting the directive of the Secretary of Defense.</p>

	<p>Award #N1336                      09/01/2013-06/30/2015                      9.0 calendar</p> <p>Naval Special Warfare-WARCOM</p> <p>265,000.00</p> <p>Validating Gender-Neutral Standards for SEAL and SWCC Selection</p> <p>The primary aims of this project are (1) To determine whether the selection criteria for entry into SEAL/SWCC training are accurate predictors of success during SEAL/SWCC training; and (2) To establish task-dependent selection and training criteria, which could then be viewed as “gender neutral,” thus meeting the directive of the Secretary of Defense.</p> <p>Award #N1324                      03/01/2013-09/30/2016                      0.6 calendar</p> <p>Office of Navy Research</p> <p>Independent Evaluation of the ETOWL software program</p> <p>The Office of Navy Research funded Iowa University to develop a virtual Marine that will predict the effect of load on physiological and biomechanical parameters. This project aims to independently test the developed software using “live” active duty military personnel to determine the accuracy of the software program.</p> <p>Award #N1310                      03/01/2013-09/30/2016                      2.4 calendar</p> <p>Program Manager-Infantry Combat Equipment</p> <p>Personal Protection Equipment Development</p> <p>The purpose of this project is to test a prototype of a novel plate carrier system against the existing plate carrier system in a variety of different load conditions as well as in various environments.</p> <p>Award #N1305    02/01/2012-09/30/2015                      1.0 calendar</p> <p>Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs</p> <p>Lumbar Spine Musculoskeletal Physiology and Biomechanics During Simulated Military Operations</p> <p>The purpose of this project is to determine if lumbar disc and muscle degeneration alters the kinematics response of the lumbar spine to functional positions and loads, predisposing individuals to injury.</p> <p>Award # N1301    10/01/2012-09/30/2015                      0.6 calendar</p>
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	<p>Naval Special Warfare-Center Evaluation of VASPER The purpose of this project is to evaluate whether the VASPER system can be used as an adjunctive mode of training in U.S. Navy SEALs.</p> <p>Award # 21A839            03/01/2012-12/30/2015            1.0 calendar Naval Special Warfare-Group 1 Androgen Deficiency in Navy SEALs The purpose of this project is to identify risk factors associated with hormonal imbalance in our elite forces. The study address caloric intake, expenditure, sleep hygiene, alcohol consumption as well as lifestyle choices that may influence hormone production in Navy SEALs.</p> <p>Award # 21A843            09/30/2012-9/30/2015    0.4 calendar Naval Special Warfare-Group 1 Warrior Development The purpose of this project is to identify risk factors associated with decrements in performance and to evaluate means by which to improve the Special Warfighter.</p> <p>Award # N1263 09/30/2012-09/30/2016    0.6 calendar Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Prescriptive Exercise Therapy Program to Reduce Hyper-arousal in Residential Treatment for Active Duty Service Members Diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder To improve the quality of exercise/physical training the service members are receiving while at OASIS, as well as to develop a new exercise program and assist in training the staff at OASIS to maintain the quality of physical training after the project is complete. It is hypothesized that with better exercise and physical training there will be improvements in symptoms of PTSD, better compliance with exercise, increased mood and thus functionality of the persons obtaining treatment at OASIS.</p>
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Name:	Dr. Samuel Ward PT, PhD
Project Role:	Primary Investigator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	0000-0002-4470-155X
Nearest person month worked:	6
Contribution to Project:	Dr. Ward has assisted with project oversight and interpretation of results
Funding Support:	<p><u>Ongoing Research Support</u></p> <p>R01 HD073180-01A1 (PI: Ward)                      04/01/2013 – 03/31/2018 NIH/NICHD</p> <p><b>The Physiological Basis of Rotator Cuff Muscle Rehabilitation</b></p> <p>The goal of this project is to elucidate the structural, mechanical, and physiological consequences of tendinopathy-related muscle atrophy and degeneration after rotator cuff tears in humans. Architectural, passive mechanical, and gene expression profiles will be measured and compared amongst patients with different rotator cuff tear severities.</p> <p>2012-5219 PR120576 (PI: Ward)                      09/30/2013 – 09/29/2016 DoD (PRMRP/CDMRP)</p> <p><b>Lumbar Spine Musculoskeletal Physiology and Biomechanics During Simulated Military Operations</b></p> <p>The goals of this project are to; 1) understand lumbar spine and lumbar disc kinematics during simulated operational conditions, 2) understand the effect of load and body position on spine and disc kinematics when pathology is present, and 3) understand the influence of muscle structure and physiology on lumbar spine kinematics.</p> <p>2R01HD031476-11A1 (PI: Kaufman [Mayo], Sub CO-PI: Ward) 07/01/2011 - 06/30/2016 NIH/NICHD</p> <p><b>Microsensor for Intramuscular Pressure Measurement</b></p> <p>The purpose of this grant is to develop a miniature pressure transducer to measure tissue fluid pressure in skeletal muscle and then to determine the effects of muscle architecture, fascia, limb orientation and type of activation on pressure. The study employs the rabbit tibialis anterior muscle model and consists primarily of in situ muscle physiological experimentation combined</p>

	<p>with continuum mechanics modeling.</p> <p>A6239R (PI: Lieber, CO-I: Ward) 10/01/2012-09/30/2016 Veterans Medical Research Foundation</p> <p><b>Mechanical Basis for Tensioning Tendon Transfers</b></p> <p>The purpose of this proposal is to measure the <i>in vivo</i> properties of muscles commonly used in tendon transfer surgery. We propose to develop a new instrument for measuring sarcomere lengths intraoperatively and to assess post-operative function in these patients.</p> <p>1P30AR061303 (PI: Lieber, Core-Director: Ward) 09/01/2011-08/31/2016 NIH (NIAMS)</p> <p><b>San Diego Skeletal Muscle Research Center</b></p> <p>The purpose of this Center is to establish a consortium of skeletal muscle scientists between UC San Diego, Sanford-Burham, the Scripps Research Institute, and San Diego State University. The Center provides education, pilot funding, and direct scientific support.</p> <p>R01 AR057836 (PI: Thomopolus/Galatz Wash U, Sub PI: Ward) 09/15/2010 – 06/30/2015 NIH/NIAMS</p> <p><b>Rotator Cuff Degeneration and Repair.</b></p> <p>The purpose of this study is to measure the passive mechanical and related protein changes in rat skeletal muscle after rotator cuff tears.</p> <p>2 R24 HD050837 (Co-PI: Lieber, Ward) 09/15/2005 - 07/31/2015 NIH/NICHD</p> <p><b>“National Center for Muscle Rehabilitation Research.”</b></p> <p>The purpose of this grant is to provide a resource to the rehabilitation professionals to perform state-of-the-art muscle experiments. Disciplines include physiology, microscopic imaging, MR imaging and clinical measurements. In addition, the Center provides sabbatical opportunities and pilot project support to rehabilitation professionals interested in skeletal muscle research.</p> <p>5 R01 AR057393 (Co-PI: Lieber, Ward) 7/01/2010 – 6/30/2015</p>
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	<p>NIH/NIAMS</p> <p><b>“Muscle Biological and Biomechanical Response in Cerebral Palsy.”</b></p> <p>The purpose of this proposal is to understand the changes that occur in muscles after contracture formation and to test conservative treatment options. This is due to the large number of children with CP seen in the rehabilitation setting and the number who undergo surgical correction for contracture (making their muscle tissue available)</p> <p>R01 AR057013-01A1 (PI: Ward, Samuel) 07/01/2009 – 06/30/2014</p> <p>NIH/NIMAS</p> <p><b>Muscle Structure, Toxin Dose, and Exercise Affect Botulinum Toxin Efficiency.</b></p> <p>The purpose of this grant is to understand the acute and chronic effects of botulinum toxin type A on skeletal muscle structure and function.</p> <p>Experiments include muscle physiology, histology, cellular biology, MRI and bioluminescence measurements.</p>
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- **Has there been a change in the active other support of the PD/PI(s) or senior/key personnel since the last reporting period?**
  - Nothing to report
- **What other organizations were involved as partners?**
  - **Organization Name:** San Diego State University
  - **Location of Organization:** San Diego, CA
  - **Partner's contribution to the project**
    - **Collaboration:** Sara Gombatto PT, PhD. Provided assistance during data collection and data interpretation

**8. SPECIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

- **COLLABORATIVE AWARDS:** None
- **QUAD CHARTS:** See attached FY1415\_QuadChart\_W81XWH-13-2-0043

**9. APPENDICES:**

- Quad Chart: FY1415\_QuadChart\_W18XWH-13-2-0043.pptx

# Lumbar Spine Musculoskeletal Physiology and Biomechanics During Simulated Military Operations

PR120576:

W81XWH-13-2-0043



PI: Samuel Ward, Karen Kelly

Org: UC San Diego, NHRC

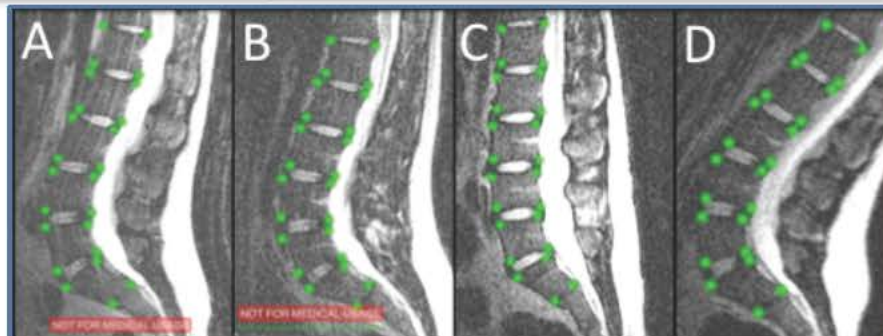
Award Amount: \$1,250,000.00

## Study/Product Aim(s)

- To compare lumbar spine kinematics in simulated operational conditions in Marines with measureable disc pathology
- To quantify changes in lumbar spine muscle architecture in Marines with measureable lumbar disc pathology

## Approach

Each Marine undergoes high-resolution structural and physiological imaging of the lumbar vertebrae and discs in a high strength (3T) supine MRI. Marines then undergo a 3D imaging protocol in an upright, low strength (0.6T) MRI in standing unloaded, standing loaded (25lb body armor), sitting loaded and prone on elbows positions. To investigate the effect of load magnitude and distribution, some Marines were scanned in standing unloaded and standing loaded conditions (6 conditions: 22kg, 33kg, 45kg x 50/50, 20/80 anterior/posterior). Back pain history is recorded for each subject at time of data collection.



Sample Sagittal T2-Weighted Scans in Standing Unloaded (A) Standing Loaded with 25 lbs. body armor (B) Sitting Loaded (C) Prone on Elbows Loaded (D). Points of interest were placed on the corner of each vertebrae for kinematic measurements.

Accomplishment: Scanning parameters for supine and upright MRI were optimized for best image quality. Data was collected from 30 subjects. Image quality is acceptable to preform all measurements.

## Timeline and Cost

Activities	CY	13	14	15	16
Subject Battalion Identification and Coordination					
Supine and Vertical MRI Data collection					
Data Analysis					
Dissemination of Findings					
Estimated Budget (\$K)		\$195	\$000	\$000	\$000

## Goals/Milestones

**CY13 Goal** – Initiate subject recruitment/scanning

- ☒ Begin acquiring data on minimum 8 subjects

**CY14 Goals** – Develop measurement tools

- ☒ Validate tool for measuring kinematics
- ☒ Diffusion Tensor Calculations
- ☒ Scan >40 subjects

**CY15 Goal** – Data Analysis

- ☐ Scan remaining subjects
- ☐ Analyze data from 80% of the subjects

**CY16 Goal** – Disseminate findings

- ☐ Correlate kinematic physiologic data

**Comments/Challenges/Issues/Concerns**

Nothing to Report

**Budget Expenditure to Date**

Projected Expenditure: \$406,947.00

Actual Expenditure: \$340,767.00

Updated: (20150505)