Conservative Treatment in Patients with Thoracolumbar Injury Classification Score (TLICS) of >4

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We present 7 cases in which patients with a TLICS of >4 were treated conservatively instead of surgically, which is typically recommended. Six of the patients were treated with a brace and one was not given any spine intervention.
METHODS

A descriptive series of cases of 7 patients who presented to the emergency department after surgical trauma was reviewed. Each presented with distraction/chance fracture morphology, were all neurologically intact, and either had an injury or suspected injury to the posterior ligamentous complex (PLC).
Pain improved with conservative treatment in two cases and patients were able to return to work. Only one patient experienced worsening of pain and had an elective surgery after consultation with another surgeon, who deemed the fracture to be more severe than the first surgeon. Four patients did not follow up.
Review suggests that a subset of patients with a TLICS greater than 4 may respond to conservative treatment. Given that conservative treatments are safer for the patients, and that, as our study illustrates, the success rate is relatively high, future studies should examine this conservative approach to treating TLICS in more depth in order to determine whether it is a more beneficial way to treat the patients.