

### **Intervertebral Foramina**

Disease in the region of the intervertebral foramina can cause compression of the emerging nerve roots. The roots can also be compressed at different sites along its path. Presentation of **cauda equina** or nerve root entrapment will therefore depend in which root is compressed, and where it is compressed.

### **Cauda Equina Syndrome**

Cauda Equina Syndrome is due to a lesion of the lower lumbar and sacral nerve roots within the spinal canal. Depending on the cause, presentation usually begins with a prodromal stage of back pain and some mild leg symptoms. Symptoms and signs are those of a lower motor neuron lesion. Paresthesia, numbness, clumsiness and weakness, initially affecting the legs and subsequently perineal involvement, eventually results in urinary retention.

This frequently progresses within 48-72 hours and neurological status may not be retrievable even with appropriate management. The cause is most commonly a massive midline disc sequestration into the spinal canal, usually at L4-5 or **L5-S1**, rarely at L3-4. It may also occur with spondylolisthesis, in which case the sacral roots stretch over the posterior corner of the upper end-plate of S1.