

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON**  
University of London  
**Examination for internal students**

For the following qualifications  
B . Sc (intercal)

**Health Sciences C113**

**Paper title: Critical appraisal of primary care practice**

Using the papers you have already been given prior to the exam to answer the following question.

**This paper is only 90 minutes long.**

You are a trainee GP (registrar) in a large practice in the north of England.

Late on a Monday evening you are consulted by Mrs R, a 34 year old solicitor who is married with 2 children. She complains of low back pain which she has had for two weeks. This is her first episode of back pain, she has no history of injury and no other symptoms. You note from her records that she has consulted on eight occasions with self-limiting conditions during the previous year. On examination you find some restriction of back movements but no other abnormalities. You prescribe a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug and give her general back care advice. She then asks to have her back X-rayed because she is worried that something is seriously wrong. You are uncertain about this but agree and arrange for her to be X-rayed.

The next day you discuss your decision to X-ray Mrs R's lumbar spine with your trainer. She refers you to a paper by Kerry et al (1) and suggests that you write a short report on the use of lumbar spine X-rays for low back pain based on this paper and the case of Mrs R.

Write the report requested by your trainer.

- 1 Kerry S, Hilton S, Dundas D et al. Radiography for low back pain: a randomized controlled trial and observational study in primary care. British Journal of General Practice 2002; 52: 469-474