

SPINAL FUSION SURGERY

39. Hon Jim Scott to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Health
- (1) Has the WA Health Department ever accepted the medical “Domino Effect Theory” in relation to spinal fusion surgery?
- (2) If yes, on what date?
- (3) Does the WA Health Department still accept the medical Domino Effect Theory in relation to spinal fusion surgery?
- (4) If no, on what date did the department reject the theory?
- (5) What medical research and/or advice was used to reach this position?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:

- (1)-(5) The Health Department of WA (HDWA) is not familiar with the term 'Domino Effect Theory' in relation to spinal fusion surgery. However, the term 'Domino degeneration' is applied to Open fusion procedures and refers to accelerated degeneration in adjacent discs.

The HDWA is aware of research carried out by the Spinal Foundation in Lancashire relating to 'Domino degeneration' in Open fusion procedures. Fusions are performed in the knowledge of this information when clinically indicated.

Evidence based medicine and the setting of standards in surgery are the province of the Royal Australian College of Surgeons and the Australian Orthopaedic Association. The College of Surgeons is implementing quality standards to support the shift to evidence based medicine.