Kemp's Test

Patient's full name: _____

Date accomplished: _____

Conductor's full name: _____

What you need
A chair (optional)

Instructions if the patient is standing

- Make sure the patient is standing before you, but with their back facing you.
- Once the patient is in position, place one of your hands in the middle of the spine.
- Then, use your other hand to grab either of the patient's shoulders.
- Next, you will lead your patient to extension by pulling them back a bit by pushing the middle of the spine and pulling back on the shoulder. Maintain the extension for three seconds.
- After that, you will lead them to a lateral flex while the spine is extended. This means you will pull the shoulder down laterally. Maintain the lateral flex position for three seconds.
- Last, while the spine is extended and laterally flexed, you will rotate the spine by pulling the shoulder toward you. Make sure to maintain this position for three seconds.
- Ask your patient if this reproduced or intensified the pain in their back, and have them tell you where exactly they felt the pain.

Instructions if the patient is seated

- Stand behind your patient.
- Have your patient cross their arms over their chest.
- Place one of your hands on the lumbosacral region of the spine to stabilize it.
- Place your other hand in the upper region of the back (you can go for the shoulder). You will use this hand to control their movement.
- Passively flex the patient's body (you will bend them forward). Maintain the flexed position for three seconds.
- Then, circumduct them forward and then to the right or left.
- Have the patient arch their stomach forward while you push down on the shoulder to laterally flex them. Maintain this position for three seconds.
- Last, extend their back by pulling back on the shoulder.
- Ask your patient if this reproduced or intensified the pain in their back, and have them tell you where exactly they felt the pain.

Results

If the patient felt pain while you flexed and extended their back, ask them if the pain they felt is in a specific location and ask them to pinpoint where. If the pain is in a specific location, it is a localized pain and indicative of a facet joint pathology. This means they are **positive** for this test. Please endorse them for further examination to determine the specific pathology and to check for other issues.

If they felt pain while you flexed and extended their back, but they describe the pain to be radiating from one spot to multiple areas, especially if it reaches the lower extremities, they are **negative** for this test. They are likely to be positive for other tests that are specifically for assessing patients for nerve root-related back problems. If this is the case, you must still endorse them for further examination.

They are also negative if they feel no pain at all.

Patient results

- ◯ Positive
- ◯ Negative but still feels pain; the pain radiates
- ◯ Negative because the patient didn’t feel any pain at all

Additional comments