

TABLE E-1 Histological Grading Scale<sup>22\*</sup>

Grade	
<b>I. Anulus fibrosus</b>	
1	Normal pattern of fibrocartilage lamellae (u-shaped in the posterior aspect and slightly convex in the anterior aspect) without ruptured fibers and without a serpentine appearance anywhere within the anulus
2	Ruptured or serpentine patterned fibers in <30% of the anulus
3	Ruptured or serpentine patterned fibers in >30% of the anulus
<b>II. Border between the anulus fibrosus and nucleus pulposus</b>	
1	Normal
2	Minimal interruption
3	Moderate/severe interruption
<b>III. Cellularity of the nucleus pulposus</b>	
1	Normal cellularity with large vacuoles in the gelatinous structure of the matrix
2	Slight decrease in the number of cells and fewer vacuoles
3	Moderate/severe decrease (>50%) in the number of cells and no vacuoles
<b>IV. Matrix of the nucleus pulposus</b>	
1	Normal gelatinous appearance
2	Slight condensation of the extracellular matrix
3	Moderate/severe condensation of the extracellular matrix

\*The histological grading scale is based on four categories of degenerative changes with scores ranging from 4 points (1 point in each category) for a normal disc to 12 points for a severely degenerated disc.