Editorial

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Received: 14 September 2017 / Accepted: 14 September 2017 / Published online: 20 September 2017
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Christian Georg Schmorl (1861–1932), a German pathologist remembered for his work in histology, published images of the vertebral end-plates in his book “*Die Gesunde und Kranke Wirbelsäule*” (The Healthy and Sick Spine), which truly have not dated. It took decades, however, before serious attention was again given to this structure by Hilton and co-workers (RC Hilton, J Ball, and RT Benn: Vertebral endplate lesions (Schmorl’s nodes) in the dorsolumbar spine. *Ann Rheum Dis*; 1976). Since then, a lot of researchers have studied the endplates either biomechanically, histologically, biologically or radiologically. Yet, we still do not fully understand its function and behavior.

The study performed by the ISSLS Spinal Phenotype Focus Group was long overdue and the researchers are to be commended for putting the endplates back on the map.

I participated in their survey and must confess a feeling of unease when realizing how poorly I fared trying to

answer the simple questions. Now that the paper is out, I feel much reassured: the wide variation in the evaluation of structural endplate findings on MRI, which they observed, indicate the dire need to come to consensual definitions. The authors’ effort to pave the way for a Delphi process is laudable. Even more so considering the recent surge in studies on disc regeneration, disc and/or nucleus replacement, total disc transplantation and more.

The European Spine Journal encourages scientists to contribute to our knowledge by studying the vertebral endplates and invites them to submit their research. Bene diagnoscitur, bene curatur.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

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