

**INTRODUCTION AND
AIM OF THE WORK**

INTRODUCTION

In RA the lumbar spine is a relatively under researched area, the seminal work remains that of Lawrence who identified distinct radiological features characterizing RA of the lumbar spine, including disc narrowing without osteophytosis, spondylolisthesis, facet joint erosions and osteoporosis (*Lawrence et al., 1964*). These characteristic radiological changes were partly supported by cadaveric studies, although the pathological changes were more completely described by *Ball (1971)*.

More recently kuwahara and colleagues in Japan have affirmed the earlier findings of Lawrence in a case controlled study (*Kuwahara et al., 1989*).

RA is characterized by widespread inflammatory synovitis. The pathological studies of (*Lawrence 1964*), (*Ball 1971*) and (*Kuwahara 1989*) found frequent, often radiologically negative, involvement of the lumbar facet (zygoapophyseal) joints. Synovial granulation tissue has also been found in extra-synovial sites in the lumbar spine, particularly in the intervertebral disc.