Social Security and Disability

Lower back pain is one of the most common ailments afflicting Americans. It can, in fact, be disabling, but the Social Security Administration’s rules (<https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/1.00-Musculoskeletal-Adult.htm>) on back pain and disability are quite complex. They include phrases such as “We will not substitute an alleged or a reported increase in the intensity of a symptom, such as pain, no matter how severe, for a medical sign or diagnostic finding present in the listing criteria. Pain is included as just one consideration in 1.15A , 1.16A, and 1.18A, but it is not required to satisfy the criteria in 1.15, 1.16, and 1.18” and “If you have not yet had the recommended surgery or PT, we will not assume that these interventions will resolve your disorder or improve your functioning. We will assess each case on an individual basis.” Because of the complexity of the rules—they come to almost 20 pages—the agency is building an AI system to adjudicate—rather, to help examiners adjudicate—claims. Suppose that someone is denied coverage. How should the system be designed to enable people to contest the decision?

Questions to ponder:

* 1. Who might want to challenge a ruling?
	2. What personal knowledge might they already have?
	3. What might they need to acquire?

What has the government previously published about the AI model being used?