

Open Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Scanning

NHS Devon

Commissioning policy

Referral for open MRI scanning of greater than 0.5T as an alternative to conventional MRI in secondary care is commissioned only for:

- patients who suffer from claustrophobia where an oral prescription sedative has not been effective (flexibility in the route of sedative administration may be required in paediatric patients as oral prescription may not be appropriate)

OR

- patients who are obese or cannot fit comfortably in conventional MRI scanners

Standing, upright, weight-bearing or positional MRI will not be commissioned.

Rationale for the decision

Open-design

Open MRI allows for imaging without the patient being placed within an enclosed space. Open MRI has become the standard of care when conventional design is contraindicated. Specifically, this includes patients who would require sedation for a conventional MRI such as severely claustrophobic or paediatric patients.

Standing, Weight-Bearing, Positional, or Upright MRI

Washington State published a Health Technology Assessment on Standing, Weight-Bearing, Positional, or Upright MRI (2006). Conclusions included that:

- there is limited scientific data available on the accuracy and diagnostic utility of standing, upright, weight-bearing or positional MRI
- there is no evidence from well-designed clinical trials demonstrating the accuracy or effectiveness of weight-bearing MRI for specific conditions or patient populations

- due to the lack of evidence addressing diagnostic accuracy or diagnostic utility, standing, weight-bearing, positional MRI is considered investigational and experimental

Guidance notes on exceptionality

Where the circumstances of treatment for an individual patient do not meet the criteria described above exceptional funding can be sought. Individual cases will be reviewed by the appropriate panel of the ICB upon receipt of a completed application from the patient's GP, consultant or clinician. Applications cannot be considered from patients personally.

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