

Radiofrequency Denervation

NHS Devon

Commissioning policy

Radiofrequency Denervation is routinely commissioned in Devon for patients with chronic low back pain when the following criteria are met:

- the use of non-pharmacological (including self-management) and pharmacological interventions has failed to control pain

AND

- the main source of pain is thought to come from structures supplied by the medial branch nerve

AND

- they have moderate or severe levels of localised back pain (rated as 50% or more on a Visual Analogue or Numeric Rating scale) at the time of referral

AND

- only performed on patients with chronic low back pain when there has been a positive response to a diagnostic medial branch block (local anaesthetic +/- steroid)

A positive response to a diagnostic medial branch block is defined as >50% immediate benefit in agreed pain score, compared to baseline immediately prior to the procedure.

Repeated Radiofrequency Denervation will only be funded when;

- the previous procedure was performed more than 16 months earlier

AND

- the origin of the pain is in the same location

Rationale for the decision

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance for low back pain (NG59) recommends the use of radiofrequency denervation for patients with chronic low back pain who meet the criteria detailed within the policy.

A health economic model developed by NICE to inform this guideline suggests that radiofrequency denervation is cost effective provided the duration of pain relief exceeds 16 months.

This policy has been reviewed with regard to guidance for lumbar radiofrequency denervation published by the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges in November 2020, which recommends it should only be offered in accordance with NICE guideline NG59.

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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20.05.2021	Policy agreed by NHS Devon CCG following consideration of Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AMRC) Evidence Based Interventions Guidance for CCGs Policy adopted by NHS Devon ICB on 01.07.2022