Procedures of Limited Clinical Value and Clinical Thresholds

Frequently asked Questions

What is a procedure of limited clinical value?

Procedures of limited clinical value and low value procedures are those which:

- Have clear evidence that they are ineffective.
- Have no evidence of effectiveness and are not being delivered in a context that would allow the gathering of an evidence base to judge effectiveness, i.e. through ethically approved research.
- Have evidence of effectiveness but are being offered to patients whose characteristics are different from the characteristics of the patients in the research studies which produced the evidence for effectiveness
- Use resources that would produce more value, namely a better balance of benefit, if invested in some other service for the same group of patients for example, the procedure is of better value when delivered in a specific setting

What is a clinical threshold?

Clinical thresholds are criteria a patient must meet for treatment where a procedure is deemed to offer limited clinical value.

What is Rotherham CCG's approach to procedures of limited clinical value?

Clinical thresholds have been agreed between TRFT and RCCG clinicians. These are based on evidence based practice. The clinical thresholds for treatment as set out in RCCG's Clinical Thresholds Policy.

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all patients who are registered with a Rotherham GP. It will also apply if the patient is referred to other providers outside of Rotherham.

Which treatments are included in the policy ?

The following procedures are included:

- Cholecystectomy for mild/asymptomatic gallstones
- Hernia Repair
- Dupuytren's contracture
- Trigger Finger
- Carpal Tunnel Surgery
- Ganglion Surgery
- Hip and Knee Replacement
- Tonsillectomy
- Grommets
- Varicose veins surgery
- Hysterectomy/Hysteroscopy for Heavy Menstrual Bleeding.

How do I refer the patient?

Patients should be referred electronically. A checklist must be completed for all patients and the relevant information included in the referral letter. A referral will be returned without the relevant documentation or where the patient does not meet the threshold for treatment.

Electronic checklists for each individual treatment can be found on SystemOne/EMIS Web.

What should I do if the patient does not meet the threshold but I still feel requires treatment?

A request should be made through the individual funding requests panel (IFR) where you believe exceptional circumstances for treatment exist. The IFR policy can be found at:

http://www.rotherhamccg.nhs.uk/Downloads/Policies%20and%20Procedures/Individual%20Funding%20Request%20Policies/Rothehram%20%20IFR%20Policy%20March%202016.pdf

What would constitute exceptional circumstances

An individual funding request can be made for a treatment that is not routinely offered by the NHS when a clinician believes that their patient is clearly different to other patients with the same condition or where their patient might benefit from the treatment in a different way to other patients. This is known as "clinical exceptionality". As an example, dental implants are not routinely offered by the NHS, however if a patients could not use their arms due to a disability and needed dental implants to hold a pen so they could write, this might be considered an exceptional case.

Can patients access private treatment for these conditions?

These procedures are not funded by the NHS unless certain criteria are met. It is a decision for the patient as to whether they might wish to seek a specialist opinion privately or pay for private treatment.

How can a patient raise a concern/complaint about this policy?

Information regarding how to raise concerns or make a complaint to the RCCG can be found at: http://www.rotherhamccg.nhs.uk/concerns-and-complaints.htm

or alternatively they can telephone: 01709 302108

or email: complaints@rotherhamccg.nhs.uk

or write to:

Rotherham CCG, Oak House, Moorhead Way, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S66 1YY