

CLINICAL POLICY ADVISORY GROUP (CPAG)

Arthroscopic Knee Washout for Patients with Osteoarthritis Policy

This procedure requires prior approval. Prior approval must be sought through Blueteq.

Criteria:

■ **Black** – criteria required to be met prior to referral

■ **Blue** – criteria to be met prior to procedure

Statement

Derby and Derbyshire CCG, in line with its principles for procedures of limited clinical value has deemed that **Arthroscopic Knee Washout for Patients with Osteoarthritis** should not routinely be commissioned unless the criteria within this policy are met.

Arthroscopic knee washout (lavage and debridement) should not be used as a treatment for osteoarthritis because it is clinically ineffective.

Referral for arthroscopic lavage and debridement should not be offered as part of treatment for osteoarthritis **unless the person has knee osteoarthritis with a clear history of mechanical locking.**

More effective treatment includes exercise programmes (e.g. [ESCAPE pain](#)), losing weight (if necessary) and managing pain. Osteoarthritis is relatively common in older age groups. Where symptoms do not resolve after non-operative treatment, referral for consideration of knee replacement, or joint preserving surgery such as osteotomy is appropriate.

These commissioning intentions will be reviewed periodically. This is to ensure affordability against other services commissioned by the CCG.

1. Background

Osteoarthritis of the knee can cause pain, stiffness, swelling and difficulty in walking. Arthroscopic washout of the knee is an operation where an arthroscope (camera) is inserted into the knee along with fluid. Occasionally loose debris drains out with the fluid, or debridement, (surgical removal of damaged cartilage) is performed, but the procedure does not improve symptoms or function of the knee joint.

2. Recommendation

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■ **Blue – criteria to be met prior to procedure**

Arthroscopic knee washout (lavage and debridement) should not be used as a treatment for osteoarthritis because it is clinically ineffective.

Referral for arthroscopic lavage and debridement should not be offered as part of treatment for osteoarthritis, unless the person has knee osteoarthritis with a clear history of mechanical locking.

More effective treatment includes exercise programmes (e.g. [ESCAPE pain](#)), losing weight (if necessary) and managing pain. Osteoarthritis is relatively common in older age groups. Where symptoms do not resolve after non-operative treatment, referral for consideration of knee replacement, or joint preserving surgery such as osteotomy is appropriate.

3. Rationale for Recommendation

NICE has reviewed the evidence for how well knee washout works for people with osteoarthritis. Seven clinical trials and three case studies have shown that knee wash out for people with osteoarthritis did not reduce pain nor improve how well their knees worked. There was a small increased risk of bleeding inside the knee joint (haemarthrosis) (2%) or blood clot in the leg (deep vein thrombosis) (0.5%).

Arthroscopy for osteoarthritis in the knee will only benefit patients if there is a history of specific symptoms such as the knee locking.

There are several alternatives that can improve symptoms and function. These include, exercise, physiotherapy, losing weight and sometimes steroid injections. Carefully managed pain relief for relatively short periods can also be prescribed.

4. Useful Resources

- NHS Website: Arthroscopy. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/arthroscopy/>
- Escape Pain. Enabling Self-management and Coping with Arthritic Pain using Exercise <https://escape-pain.org/>

5. References

- Academy of Medical Royal Colleges. Knee Arthroscopy for Patients with Osteoarthritis. <https://www.aomrc.org.uk/ebi/clinicians/knee-arthroscopy-for-patients-with-osteoarthritis/>
- NICE IPG230. Arthroscopic knee washout, with or without debridement, for the treatment of osteoarthritis <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ipg230/chapter/1-Guidance>
- NICE Do Not Do Recommendation. Arthroscopic lavage and debridement. <https://www.nice.org.uk/donotdo/do-not-refer-for-arthroscopic-lavage-and-debridement-as-part-of-treatment-for-osteoarthritis-unless-the-person-has-knee-osteoarthritis-with-a-clear-history-of-mechanical-locking-as-opposed-to-morning>

- NICE Guidance CG177. Osteoarthritis: Care and Management
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG177>
- Royal College of Surgeons Commissioning Guides: Painful Osteoarthritis of the Knee
July 2017 <https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/-/media/files/rcs/standards-and-research/commissioning/boa--painful-oa-knee-guide-final-2017.pdf>

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Consultation

All relevant providers/stakeholders will be consulted via a named link consultant/specialist. Views expressed should be representative of the provider/stakeholder organisation. CPAG will consider all views to inform a consensus decision, noting that sometimes individual views and opinions will differ.

Consultee	Date
Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, UHDBFT	March 2022
Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, CRHFT	March 2022
Clinical Policy Advisory Group (CPAG)	April 2022
Clinical and Lay Commissioning Committee (CLCC)	May 2022

Appendix 2 - Document Update

Document Update	Date Updated
<u>Version 5.0</u> Policy has been re-worded and reformatted to reflect the DDCCG clinical policies format. This includes the addition of background information, useful resources, references and consultation.	April 2022

Appendix 3 - Blueteq Form

[Click here to access the guidelines/NICE algorithm](#)

[Click to view Southern Derbyshire CCG Policies](#)

Prior Approval Form - Prior Approval Form - (PLCV) Secondary Arthroscopic Knee Washout for Patients with Osteoarthritis			
PATIENT CONSENT			
I confirm the patient has consented to sharing personal and clinical information contained within this referral form. The Derbyshire Prior Approval Team will process this information, clarify data and communicate with the patient and the GP on the outcome.			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
By submitting this request you are confirming that you have reviewed this request against relevant policy and believe the patient meets the relevant threshold criteria and therefore you have fully explained to the patient the proposed treatment and they have consented to you raising this referral on their behalf.			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Please confirm that you have given PLCV patient leaflet to the patient			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
APPLICANT DETAILS			
Clinician Making Request:		Trust:	
Clinician Full Name:	<input type="text"/>	Telephone:	<input type="text"/>
Contact Email (nhs.net):	<input type="text"/>		
PATIENT DETAILS			
Patient Name:		GP Practice Name:	
NHS Number:		GP Practice Code:	
Patient DOB:		Is the patient a smoker:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Primary Care Prior Approval Number:	<input type="text"/>		
PROCEDURE CRITERIA			
Derby and Derbyshire CCG (DDCCG) has deemed that arthroscopic knee washout as a treatment method for patients with osteoarthritis should not be commissioned, unless mechanical locking occurs (in which case it may be considered).			
1. Please confirm if the patient has mechanical features of true locking.			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No * Required
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION			
Please provide any additional clinical information that may have a bearing on the application in the text box below.			
SUBMISSION DECLARATION			
I confirm that the above information is complete and accurately describes the patient's condition.			
Submitting User:	<input type="text"/>	Date:	<input type="text"/>