Developing One NHS in Dorset
Acute Care Collaboration Vanguard

NHS

Pan-Dorset Lumbar Spine Plain Film Imaging Guideline

This referral guideline has been agreed for use across Dorset and applies to imaging requests for adults via inpatients, outpatients, GPs and Accident and Emergency Departments.

Lumbar Spine X-Ray MAY be indicated:

- ✓ Trauma
- ✓ ? insufficiency fracture for known osteopenia **or** Women >65 & Men >75 (NICE, 2017) with sudden increase in pain
- ✓ Previous surgery – instrumentation, fusion– *by Ortho request*
- ✓ ? Fracture – Ankylosing spondylitis.
- ✓ Pre-operative surgery – *by Ortho request*
- ✓ Flexion and extension views for instability (weight bearing laterals only) - *by specialist request.*
- ✓ Scoliosis/kyphosis for Orthopaedic or Rheumatology surgical cases
- ✓ Paediatric Scoliosis/kyphosis (weight bearing views) - *by Paed Specialist Ortho request*
- ✓ Weight Bearing X-rays for monitoring fractures – *by Ortho & UHS request*

Lumbar Spine X-Ray is NOT routinely indicated:

- × Lower back pain in adults
- × Sciatica
- × ? Degenerative changes
- × ? Metastases
- × ? Changes in/Diagnoses of Ankylosing Spondylitis
- × Chiropractor referrals

Pelvis & Lumbar Spine Requests

Only a pelvis will be obtained IF the Lumbar Spine is NOT JUSTIFIED as per indications documented.

For more information contact:

Radiology Clinical Lead at your nearest hospital; University Hospitals Dorset (Poole, Bournemouth, & Christchurch) or Dorset County Hospital.

HELP US REDUCE UNNECESSARY RADIATION EXPOSURE:

Typical Effective Dose for a Lumbar Spine Plain Film X-Ray is 1.0 mSv This is equivalent to the radiation dose from 50 chest X-Rays or 5 months background radiation

- Degeneration of the lumbar spine is a normal aging process -

--Planar X-ray imaging has low sensitivity for detecting bone lesions--

This referral guideline is based on current clinical evidence/national best practice documented by RCR iRefer & NICE.

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