

South Central Priorities Committee

(Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth PCTs)

Policy Recommendation 110: Routine Follow-up After Primary Hip or Knee Replacement Surgery

Date of Issue: August 2011

South Central Priorities Committee (Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth PCTs) has considered the evidence for routine follow-up of patients after primary hip or knee joint replacement and recommends that NHS funding for **ongoing, long-term routine follow-up** after primary surgery should be **LOW PRIORITY**. On the basis of current evidence, the committee **RECOMMENDS** that:

- The majority of patients can be discharged from hospital without the need for routine review. However, around 20% of patients have short term problems post-surgery (difficulty mobilising, superficial infection, pain, etc).
- It can be difficult to predict which patients will have problems. **Therefore, all patients should be offered a review appointment at around 6-8 weeks post discharge.**
- **Routine** review after the 6-8 weeks post discharge appointment should **not** be offered.
- Patients, and their GPs, should be made aware of the symptoms that should be presented to the GP and which should trigger referral for orthopaedic assessment.

There is a lack of evidence to support any routine follow-up for patients after primary total hip or knee joint replacement. Evidence from one cost-effectiveness study indicates that no routine follow up is likely to be cost saving and produce slightly greater health benefits for patients compared to a policy of routine follow-up. Lack of consensus among clinicians is reflected by the wide variation in practice currently seen across the UK and between South Central providers.

NOTES:

1. *Exceptional circumstances may be considered where there is evidence of significant health impairment and there is also evidence of the intervention improving health status.*
2. *This policy will be reviewed in the light of new evidence or guidance from NICE.*
3. *South Central policies can be viewed at <http://www.sph.nhs.uk/priorities/policy-statements>*