

SHIP8 Clinical Commissioning Groups Priorities Committee

No. 48

Policy Recommendation: Ganglion excision

Date of issue: February 2019

The Committee discussed the evidence and recommended adoption of the following:

A ganglion cyst is a fluid filled swelling that develops near a joint or tendon. The cyst can range from the size of a pea to the size of a golf ball. Most ganglia get better on their own. Interventions for ganglia are considered to be of limited clinical value and are not commissioned except in the following circumstances;

Wrist Ganglion

Interventions for wrist ganglion should only be considered if there are **significant neurological symptoms**. Initially this will be by aspiration with surgical excision considered only if aspiration fails to resolve the pain and there is restricted hand function.

Seed Ganglion

Ganglia in the palm of the hand (seed ganglia) occur at the base of fingers. Interventions should only be considered if there is **significant pain and a loss in function**. This should be by aspiration using a hypodermic needle initially with surgical excision only considered if ganglion persists or recurs and there is significant pain and a loss in function

Mucoid Cysts

Ganglions which form just below the nail (mucous cysts) come from the last joint in the finger and are related to degeneration in the joint. Interventions should only be considered if there are **recurrent spontaneous discharges of fluid or the cyst disrupts the nail growth causing significant functional impairment or pain**.

Surgery causes restricted wrist and hand function for 4-6 weeks, may leave an unsightly scar and be complicated by recurrent ganglion formation. Aspiration of wrist ganglia may relieve pain and restore hand function, and "cure" a minority (30%). Most ganglia reform after aspiration but they may then be painless.

Review date: February 2023

Whilst the panel recognised the considered expert advice of NICE and NHS England EBI in their recommendation the panel also had a duty to prioritise spending of a finite resource locally and made a decision which it felt gave the most equitable and effective use of investment