

Thames Valley Priorities Committee Commissioning Policy Statement

Policy No. TVPC56 **Facet joint injections and medial branch blocks for chronic neck pain**

Recommendation made by the Priorities Committee: **January 2016; reviewed March 2021¹**

Date of issue: **May 2021**

The Thames Valley Priorities Committee has considered the evidence for the clinical and cost effectiveness of therapeutic and diagnostic facet joint injections and medial branch blocks for the treatment of chronic low back and neck pain.

The Committee concluded that the evidence for clinical and cost effectiveness is inadequate and therefore recommends that facet joint injections and medial branch blocks for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes are **not normally funded**.

Injection of local anaesthetic, steroid or other agents around the primary nerve innervating the facet joint (the medial branch of the posterior primary ramus) is termed a medial branch block. Facet joint injections involve injection of substances into the facet joint itself. Facet joints are small stabilizing joints located between and behind adjacent vertebrae in the spine and are believed to contribute to spinal pain in some cases.

NOTES:

- Potentially exceptional circumstances may be considered by a patient's CCG where there is evidence of significant health status impairment (e.g. inability to perform activities of daily living) and there is evidence that the intervention sought would improve the individual's health status.
- This policy will be reviewed in the light of new evidence or new national guidance, e.g., from NICE.
- Thames Valley clinical policies can be viewed at <http://www.fundingrequests.cscsu.nhs.uk/>

Primary OPCS codes:

V54.4 Injection around spinal facet of spine

Y82.1 Nerve block injections

W90.3 Injection of therapeutic substance into joint

Secondary OPCS codes: (either will be included after Primary OPCS)

Z66.3 Cervical vertebra

Z67.3 Cervical intervertebral joint

Z99.1 Intervertebral disc of cervical spine

Z06.1 Cervical Spinal cord

Z07.1 Spinal nerve root of cervical spine

¹ This policy has been reviewed; no changes have been made.