

Chronic Low Back Pain *PainChecker*TM

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Red Flags (T.I.N.T)?

- Tumour; Infection/inflammation; Neurological (cauda equina)*; Trauma
- 25 < Age > 60; Cancer history; Steroid history; IVDU; other.....

- MRI
- Blood tests (incl. ESR, CRP)
- *Neuro deficit = urgent neurosurgical review

Yellow flags (C.H.A.M.P.S)? (Increased risk of chronic pain and disability)

- Catastrophic-thinking; Hypervigilance; Anxiety; Medically-focused
- Passive-coping; Stress; Substance or medication overuse; Sick of work (dissatisfaction)
- Surgical (AAA, renal, pancreas, pelvic, pregnancy).

- Pain education
- Psychosocial care (See below)

Radicular leg pain? ↓Straight leg raise test; Neuro signs (↓power, sensation, reflexes)

- Central spinal stenosis? Low back pain & leg pain/claudication.

- MRI or CT scan

Simple pain generators?

(LAs = local anaesthetic, U/S = ultrasound)

- Myofascial trigger points (lumbo-sacral angles, gluteal muscles) → LA trigger point injection
- Cluneal neuralgia (tender upper iliac crest [IC], altered sensation over buttock) → LA/steroid infiltration over IC
- Greater trochanteric bursae (GTB) (lateral thigh pain & tenderness) → U/S guided GTB injection, LA/steroid

- Pain education & key messages: Handouts; *painHEALTH* website; Pain programme; Realistic outcomes; Functional goals; 'Hurt ≠ harm'; Allay fears re x-ray findings; Stop smoking; BMI.

- Multimodal analgesia (radicular pain#): Paracetamol; Tramadol#; Tapentadol#; Buprenorphine patch; Duloxetine/SNRI#; Pregabalin#; Celecoxib or NSAID gel (flare-ups); Heat plasters (flare-ups).

- Physical therapies: Activity pacing; Walking & exercise; Core-stability; Ergonomics; Trigger-points; TENS; Hot/cold packs; Other.....

- Psychosocial care: Anxiety; Depression; Sleep hygiene; Duloxetine/SNRI; Clinical psychology; Mindfulness; CBT; Psychiatry; Alcohol; Smoking; Drugs.

- Rehabilitation: Workplace; Post-injury; Geriatric; Social work.

Explore possible pain generators?

(RF = radiofrequency 'rhizotomy', MB = medial branch of dorsal ramus)

- Cluneal neuralgia (+ LA injection) → Cluneal nerve block LA/steroid + pulsed RF treatment
- L4/5 & L5/S1 facet joints → MB blocks & pulsed RF → Thermal RF MB (facet) neurotomy
- L4/5 & L5/S1 facet joints → Facet joint LA/steroid injections
- Radicular leg pain (+ MRI/CT) → Transforaminal epidural steroid injection → Surgical decompression?
- Central spinal stenosis → As per facet joints ± radicular leg pain → Surgical decompression?
- Sacroiliac joint (SIJ) → SIJ LA/steroid injection
- Gluteal compartment (piriformis) → U/S guided gluteal examination ± LA/steroid injection
- Neuromodulation → U/S guided piriformis LA/steroid injection

Review plan → Recycle through check list

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