

Arthroscopic shoulder decompression for subacromial shoulder pain – PRIOR APPROVAL

Recent research has indicated that in patients with pure subacromial impingement (with no other associated diagnoses such as rotator cuff tears, calcific tendinopathy and acromio-clavicular joint pain), non-operative management with a combination of exercise and physiotherapy is effective in the majority of cases.

Patients suffering with persistent symptoms, despite appropriate non-operative management, should be given the option to choose decompression surgery.

Treating clinicians and surgeons should refer to the 2015 BESS/BOA/NICE commissioning guidelines (guideline update due in 2018/19) for details of appropriate treatment of these patients. https://www.boa.ac.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2014/08/Subacromial-Shoulder-Commissioning-Guide_final.pdf

In order to facilitate non-operative treatment in primary and intermediate care, BESS and Getting It Right First Time programme have produced patient exercise rehab videos and booklets for GPs and patients to use.

<http://www.bess.org.uk/index.php/public-area/shpi-videos>

Arthroscopic subacromial decompression for pure subacromial shoulder impingement should only offered in appropriate cases. To be clear, 'pure subacromial shoulder impingement' means subacromial pain not caused by associated diagnoses such as rotator cuff tears, acromio-clavicular joint pain, or calcific tendinopathy. Non-operative treatment such as physiotherapy and exercise programmes are effective and safe in many cases.

For patients who have persistent or progressive symptoms, in spite of adequate non-operative treatment, surgery should be considered. The latest evidence for the potential benefits and risks of subacromial shoulder decompression surgery should be discussed with the patient and a shared decision reached between surgeon and patient as to whether to proceed with surgical intervention.