

## **Spinal Injections – Benefits & Risks (As Treatment or Diagnostic)**

- **A common lower risk procedure of simple complexity in comparison to surgery. Is done by me regularly & have performed > 5000 injections.**
- Injection is a Mixture of Local anaesthesia & Long acting Steroid medication (Steroid act like a strong local anti-inflammatory medication).
- Done as day case under X-ray control. Need Assistant and Transport following Injection, as you would be able to drive following the injection procedure.

### **Intended Benefits**

- 1) To reduce Pain – Leg Pain / Referred Pain / Back Pain - ( Right side OR Left Side OR Both Sides )
    - Cannot guarantee to the amount of the pain relief or duration of the pain relief.
    - Average Pain relief - Could vary from 30% to 90%; Varies between patients and with the different episodes of injection in the same patient.
    - 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of Patient could have Long-term pain relief; 1/3<sup>rd</sup> could have Short Term pain relief for 2 to 12 months; 1/3<sup>rd</sup> could have pain relief <(less than?) than 6 weeks or No Pain relief.
  - 2) Diagnostic of Pain source
- Steroid medication usage for Spinal Injection is an Off-Label use. Off-label use meaning - use of an approved product in a scenario that is not included or is disclaimed in the product information. Examples include use for a different indication, in a different patient age range-group, different dose or different route of administration to that which is approved by authorities.
  - The recovery from injection, return to employment and ability to carry out various activities tends to vary due to different factors.

### **Common or Frequently occurring Risks -**

- 1) Pain, Discomfort & Pressure sensation during the Procedure under Local Anaesthesia. (Procedure duration is approximately 15 to 30 minutes)
- 2) Pain at the injection site; Back soreness or stiffness. Pain may increase for few days following the procedure
- 3) Transient numbness or weakness due to local anaesthesia, which resolves in a few hours (can last 6 hours to 12 hours in most cases).
- 4) Failure to improve leg or back pain as anticipated; Pain relief is temporary or short in duration.
- 6) If you are sedated for the procedure, there could be some side effects such as nausea, vomiting & drowsiness.

### **Rare or Occasionally occurring Risks -**

- 1) Side effects of Steroid injection (1 to 3%)
  - "Steroid flush" (red flushing of the face & chest) (1 to 2%); An increase in warmth or temperature for a few days. (Common)
  - Sleep disturbance & Anxiety; Feeling Hyperactive or Tired (for few days) (Common)
  - Increase in blood sugar in patients with diabetes (needs effective sugar control & regular monitoring of blood sugar for at least 4 to 6 weeks after injection)
  - Possible reduction in immune system for a few weeks, leading to increased susceptibility to infection. To Avoid exposure to infection & travelling to countries where infection risk is high for 5 weeks post injection. **During the Corona Virus Pandemic, we need to take extra precautions as it can result in increased vulnerability to this virus infection. The severity of the infection could become dangerous with serious consequences as explained in Covid Informed Consent** (if you contract it or if you are having the infection).
  - Suppression of the body's ability to make its own corticosteroids when individuals are taking certain medications
  - Menstrual cycle changes or increase Menstrual bleeding (in women); Water retention.
- 2) Puncture to spinal membrane causing spinal fluid leak & Headache for a few weeks
- 3) Mild Paralysis (Damage to Nerve resulting in permanent numbness & weakness of one or both legs (<0.5%); Bleeding (very rare) causing Nerve root compression and paralysis
- 4) Allergy to the medications, preservative & the contrast (dye) used. The side effects of contrast are increased in patients with renal impairment. (Rare)

### **Very Rare & Serious Risks**

- 1) Blood clots in leg (deep vein thrombosis about <0.1%) & dislodging to the lung (pulmonary embolism).
- 2) Severe Paralysis (Severe Damage to Nerve resulting in permanent numbness & weakness of one or both legs & very rarely of the bowel and bladder (risk is about 1 in 100,000)
- 3) Infection (0.1 – 0.3 %) (redness & excessive swelling at the injection site, Fever & Chills, Drainage)
- 4) Necrosis of the femoral head of hip joint (very rare)
- 5) Fluid collection / Oedema under the retina of the eye (Central serous retinopathy) (Very rare)
- 6) Death (Extremely rare). Currently the risk could be **higher with Covid-19 Pandemic**.

**If performed under sedation** - Please Fast for 6 hours before procedures. Small sip of clear plain water allowed until 2 hours before injection

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