

Medical Affairs Policy & Procedure

Title/Service: Percutaneous Lysis of Epidural Adhesions (Adhesiolysis, Epidural Neuroplasty, Racz Catheter)

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| Revised | |
| Reviewed | 07/02/04, 06/02/06, 05/18/07, 05/16/08, 12/28/09, 07/27/10, 09/16/2011 |
| Developed | 07/02/04 |
| Policy Committee Approval | 09/16/2011 |

Description:

A therapeutic procedure where a device (Racz catheter) or injected solution is used to reduce or eliminate adhesions, fibrosis, or scar tissue within the spinal column that may be a result of arachnoiditis or failed back syndrome from previous surgeries. The catheter can be inserted and manipulated in an effort to break down the adhesions. Similarly, solutions (hypertonic saline, hyaluronidase) can be injected in an effort to dissipate scar tissue.

Indications of Coverage:

None.

Limitations of Coverage:

- A. Review contract and endorsements for exclusions and prior authorization or benefit requirements.
- B. Percutaneous lysis of epidural adhesions is considered investigational. There is insufficient evidence in peer-reviewed medical literature supporting the effectiveness of the procedure.

Documentation Required:

- Office notes
- Procedure report

Rationale:

Although reports regarding the effectiveness of percutaneous lysis of epidural adhesions have been published, there are minimal reports from randomized controlled clinical trials supporting the procedure. Much of the available information is from a small number of

authors who are proponents of the procedure and have developed materials that are used during the procedure. Other reports are from studies that included only a small number of individuals and were not randomized. There are no published reports from randomized controlled clinical trials that report on long-term outcomes from the procedure or compare lysis of adhesions with other procedures for low back pain. Additional studies are continuing.

References:

1. Belozer M, Wang G. Epidural Adhesiolysis for the Treatment of Back Pain. Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. July 13, 2004. Available at: www.lni.wa.gov/ClaimsIns/Files/OMD/EpiduralAdhesiolysisJuly132004.pdf. Accessed: 25 Aug 11.
2. Manchikanti L, Pampati V, Cash KA. Protocol for evaluation of the comparative effectiveness of percutaneous adhesiolysis and caudal epidural steroid injections in low back and/or lower extremity pain without post surgery syndrome or spinal stenosis. *Pain Physician*. 2010 Mar;13(2):E91-E110.

Approved by the Medical Director