
Recently Reviewed and Updated CAT January 2019

Specific Question:

In adults with neural leg pain (sciatica), is a caudal epidural as effective as physiotherapy in reducing pain, return to work and restoring function?

Clinical bottom line

There are no large, high quality trials that compare caudal epidural injections and physiotherapy in order to answer this specific question.

There are NICE guidelines on the management of adults with sciatica (NG59).

Why is this important?

Patients with sciatica often have conservative treatment prior to invasive treatments. It is important for clinicians to have an understanding of the evidence underpinning treatments so they can assist patients when making informed treatment choices.

Search timeframe:

Initial Search 2005-2015

Updated search 2006-2016

Inclusion Criteria

	Description	Search terms (In the final document this should be a combination of your clinical and librarian search terms)
Population and Setting	Adults with neural leg pain (sciatica)	Adults, leg pain, sciatica, spinal stenosis, arthritis, disc herniation, spondylosis, spondylitis, nerve root pain, acute, chronic
Intervention or Exposure	Caudal epidural injection	Caudal, epidural, injections, glucocorticoid, steroid, local anaesthetic
Comparison, if any	Physiotherapy	Physiotherapy, Physical therapy, mobilisations, exercise, rehabilitation
Outcomes of interest e.g. Visual analogue scale, Range of motion, quality of life, function	Pain Return to work Function Cost	Pain adj4 redu* or "recovery of function" or "cost effect"

Previous CAT lead:

Kay Stevenson

Date CAT completed: Aug 2015

Updated CAT lead: Lucy Huckfield

Date CAT to be reviewed: Jan 2021

l.huckfield@keele.ac.uk

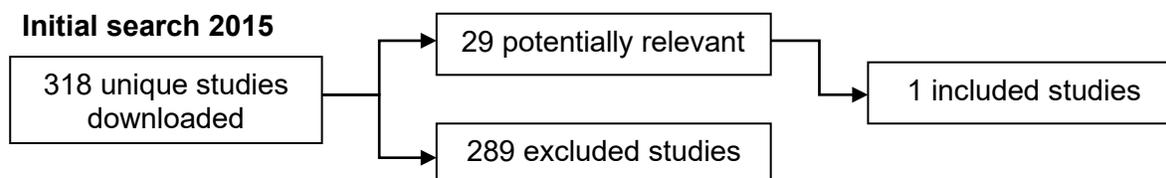
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	effectiveness	
Types of studies	National clinical practice guidelines, systematic reviews, meta-analysis, RCTs	

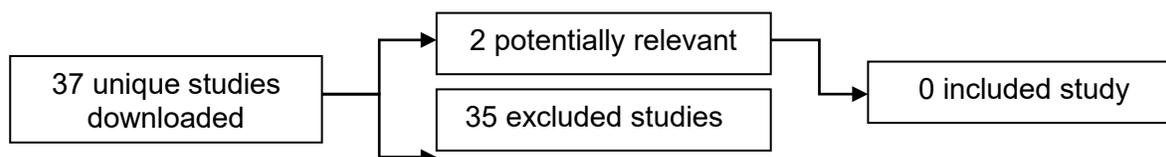
Routine Databases Searched

Clinical Knowledge Summaries, PEDro, BMJ Updates, Clinical Evidence, TRIP, Database, NICE, HTA, Bandolier, The Cochrane Library, Medline, Cinahl, Embase, PsycInfo, Professional websites. Joanna Briggs Institute, Web of science, Sports discuss and Pub med

Results of the searches:



Results of updated search -08/09/2018



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Conclusions

There are no trials that compare caudal epidurals and physiotherapy to answer this question.

Current practice is currently a stepped approach in managing patients with sciatica.

However, there are practice guidelines to support the management of patients with sciatica. Epidural injections of local anaesthetic and steroid can be considered in patients with severe disc-related sciatica. Epidural injections are not recommended for patients with central spinal canal stenosis.

References

NICE guideline (NG59) Low back pain and sciatica in over 16s: assessment and management November 2016

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG59>

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