



Cauda Equina Syndrome (CES) – Diagnostic Decision Tool

UHW Emergency Unit

For patients presenting with de novo back pain or significant exacerbation of their chronic back pain with:

Tick features that apply

History

- Bilateral sciatica
- Acute urinary retention / incontinence
- Altered perianal sensation
- Faecal incontinence

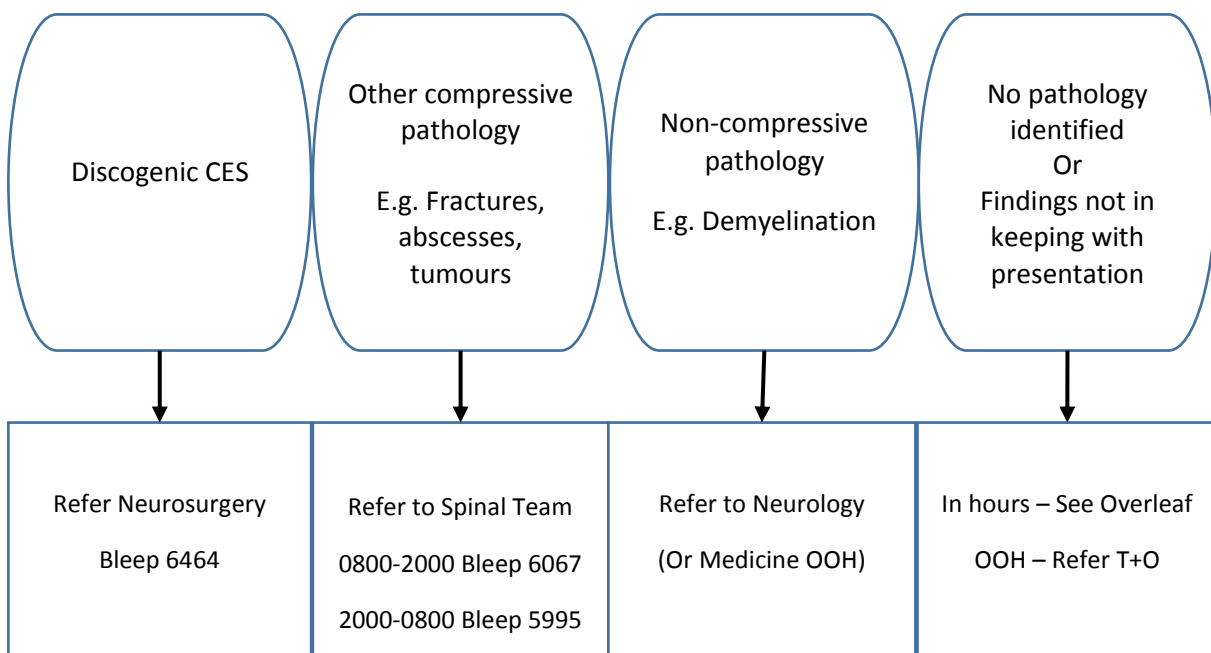
Examination

- Limb weakness
- Bladder scan volume – PVR >200ml
- Saddle anaesthesia
- Loss of anal tone

<p>Date: _____</p> <p>Time: _____</p> <p>Doctor ST4+: _____</p>	<p>Addressograph</p>
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8am – 10pm Urgent Lumbar MRI arranged by ED ST4+/Consultant with MSK Radiologist or On-call Radiology Registrar Bleep 5359 (10pm to 8am all referrals through T&O Registrar Bleep 5995)

MRI Outcomes



Suspected CES Pathway – Guidance for ED Clinicians

(In hours 0800 – 2200 Out of hours 2200 – 0800)

For patient's presenting via GP or other specialty 24 hours:

1. Triage to contact receiving specialty and to inform senior ED clinician.
2. Decision for urgent MRI to be made as jointly by ED/specialty/radiology using pathway overleaf. 0800 – 2200 ED senior can expedite MRI request if appropriate.
3. Receiving specialty will be responsible for patient.

For patient's self-presenting to the ED:

In hours:

1. Triage to contact senior clinician.
2. Pain score to be documented and Analgesia PRN.
3. Follow pathway overleaf.
4. If MRI indicated urgent scan to be arranged via MSK or on-call radiology registrar.
5. Pathology found on MRI – refer to appropriate specialty.
6. If no explanation for patients symptoms
 - a. Consider referral to Acute Pain Service (bleep 5414) and/or Incontinence team if within office hours.
 - b. Physiotherapy and/or Occupational therapy review if indicated.
 - c. Attempt to discharge if appropriate with GP follow up.
7. If unable to discharge refer to T&O for admission.
 - a. Ensure regular and PRN IV/PO/PR analgesia is prescribed.

Out of hours:

1. Triage to contact senior clinician. If suspected CES – refer T&O registrar for urgent assessment.
 - a. T&O registrar to make assessment and in discussion whether urgent MRI is required out of hours.
2. Ensure patient receives appropriate analgesia PRN.

Radiology Requests:

Monday to Friday 0900 -1700: Consultant MSK Radiologist.

All other times via the on-call Radiology registrar Bleep 5359.

All ED MRI requests to be discussed with ED Consultant prior to submission.