

Audit on Radiofrequency Denervation of the Lumbar Zygapophysial Joints.

F.Neirami, M.Sinha, V.Ganeshanathan, Debra Joseph. Princess Royal University Hospital, King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Background: The British Pain Society Pathway Group recommends lumbar joint radiofrequency denervation for selected group of patients. Different trials and retrospective evaluations show strong evidence for short term relief and moderate evidence for long-term relief from facet joint pain.

Aim: To determine the effect of radiofrequency denervation of the lumbar facet joints for relief of chronic low back pain.

Methods: All patients (n=66) with low back pain of >6 months duration with/without non-radicular radiation to the buttock, hip, and leg were included. Eligible patients underwent standardised diagnostic work-up, including a self-reported pain questionnaire, physical examination, review of imaging studies, and diagnostic blockades. Those with an appropriate response to single or double diagnostic blocks underwent standardised radiofrequency denervation of the lumbar zygapophysial joints. Patients were asked to estimate total perceived pain reduction (scale from 0%-100%) 4- 6 weeks after the procedure over phone.

Results: Out of 66 patients, 56 patients (84%) participated as the remaining patients could not be contacted. In terms of pain relief outcome, 14 patients (25%) were excellent while 13 (23%) were good and 10 (17%) were poor and in 19 patients (33%) there was no relief.

Conclusion: The audit suggests that radiofrequency denervation of lumbar zygapophysial joints provides pain relief up to at least 4-6 weeks. So further follow up should be done to review long term pain relief at 3 and 6 months.