



<b>Title</b>	Borders referral guidelines for suspected malignant spinal cord compression (MSCC)
<b>Document Type</b>	Guideline
<b>Issue no</b>	<i>Clinical Governance Support Team Use</i>
<b>Issue date</b>	January 2014
<b>Review date</b>	January 2022
<b>Distribution</b>	General via intranet
<b>Prepared by</b>	Dr Cameron Fergus and Dr Paul Cormie
<b>Developed by</b>	Dr Cameron Fergus and Dr Paul Cormie
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Dr Annabel Howell
<b>Equality &amp; Diversity Impact Assessed</b>	yes

# Borders Referral Guidelines for Suspected Malignant Spinal Cord Compression (MSCC) - Mon. to Fri. 0900 - 1700

## Patient reports symptoms suggestive of possible MSCC:

- \* Patient has history of cancer
- \* **New, increasing, severe back pain** (especially, but not exclusively thoracic)
- \* **Sudden increase in long standing back pain, especially with:**
- \* **New spinal nerve root (radicular) pain** – burning, shooting, pain around a dermatome with or without numbness
- \* **New difficulty walking** (late sign)
- \* **Bladder or bowel disturbance** (very late sign)

Patient has medical assessment and MSCC suspected and investigation and treatment would be appropriate

## Doctor contacts Palliative Care Team the same day to discuss

### Information needed:

- Name and date of birth of patient
- History of cancer (type, spread, previous treatment including radiotherapy to spine)
- Patient's general condition (e.g. too frail for transfer to Edinburgh for treatment)
- Symptoms suggesting MSCC
- Signs on examination
- *Possible* contraindications to MRI scan (e.g. pacemaker, metallic implant)

MSCC likely or possible and patient fit enough for radiotherapy

- Advises on management of patient including steroids and MRI
- Acute admission of patient is likely to be required under palliative care/general medicine

MSCC unlikely or patient not fit enough for radiotherapy

- Advises on management of patient which may include steroids and multidisciplinary assessment

Author (s):

Dr Cameron Fergus – Palliative Care Consultant

Dr Paul Cormie – Lead Cancer GP Borders

Version: 9 Reviewed by Dr Annabel Howell and Dr Kate Henriksen, Locum Consultants, Palliative Care

Status: Active

Authorised by: Palliative Care Management Team

Date of Authorisation: January 2014

Review Date: January 2017