



Reference: Spinal Stenosis
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Circular 67 of 2016: Spinal Stenosis

The Council for Medical Schemes (CMS) published *CMScript 8* on 25 March 2013 with regard to the inclusion of spinal cord compression, ischaemia or degenerative disease NOS (not otherwise specified) in the Prescribed Minimum Benefit (PMB) Regulations. The *CMScript* article specified the correct interpretation of this specific PMB category.

The article explicitly articulated that spinal stenosis without spinal cord compression, ischaemia or degenerative disease (myelopathy), but with or without radiculopathy is not included in the PMB Regulations. The publication of the article was followed by numerous training sessions aimed at healthcare providers and specifically orthopaedic surgeons.

The publication and training sessions were brought about by the large number of complaints the CMS received on unpaid or short paid accounts in respect of spinal surgery for non-PMB conditions.

The combined efforts of the *CMScript* publication and training sessions resulted in a substantial decrease in the number of complaints received on this matter.

Since January 2016, however, the Clinical Unit once more noticed a substantial increase in the number of complaints due to unpaid or short paid accounts for spinal surgery. In most cases, medical scheme members had been informed by the treating provider that the condition is included in the PMBs, and as such, all costs should be paid in full.

In view of the above, the Clinical Unit, once again, wishes to inform healthcare providers and members of medical schemes that the PMB Regulations only cover spinal stenosis where there is radiological evidence of spinal cord compression, spinal cord ischaemia or spinal cord degenerative disease NOS.

All medical interventions and treatments of spinal conditions that do not involve the spinal cord, are not included in the PMB Regulations and accounts will be paid as per the relevant medical scheme rules.

The relevant *CMScript* article is available at the following link:

http://www.medicalschemes.com/files/CMScript/CMScript8Of2012_2013.pdf

Kind regards,



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