

# Provider Led Entity

## CDI Quality Institute AUC Questions: Low Back Pain

12/06/16

**Patient/Problem:** Appropriateness of advanced imaging procedures in patients with the following clinical presentations:

- **Red flag:** Cauda equina syndrome (urinary incontinence) or major progressive neurologic deficit;
- **Red flag:** Low back pain and/or radiculopathy with suspicion of cancer with or without x-ray abnormalities, known malignancy or unexplained weight loss;
- **Red flag:** Low back pain and/or radiculopathy with suspicion of infection with or without x-ray abnormalities, immunosuppression, known IV drug abuse and/or fever or night sweats;
- Low back pain with suspected fragility fracture in an elderly patient, patient with known osteoporosis or patient with chronic steroid use;
- Nonspecific low back pain (moderate or severe) with
  - No prior management,
  - Persistent symptoms following an appropriate trial of noninvasive conservative therapy or unable to undergo conservative therapy,
  - Uncontrolled pain and/or marked disability, or
  - Evaluation for injection therapy or surgery;
- Radiculopathy with moderate to severe dysfunction and
  - No prior management,
  - Persistent symptoms following an appropriate trial of noninvasive conservative therapy or unable to undergo conservative therapy,
  - Uncontrolled pain and/or marked disability, or
  - Recurrent symptoms following discectomy,
  - Evaluation for injection therapy or surgery;
- Lumbar spinal stenosis (neurogenic claudication) with
  - No prior management,
  - Persistent symptoms following an appropriate trial of noninvasive conservative therapy or unable to undergo conservative therapy,
  - Moderate or marked disability, or
  - Evaluation for injection therapy or surgery;
- New, persistent or recurrent moderate to severe low back pain, lumbar radiculopathy and or neurogenic claudication as detailed above with

- History of previous fusion,
- Contraindication to MRI, or
- Previous MRI with discordant MRI findings and symptoms/signs.

For patients > 18 years of age,  
In a community outpatient setting, and  
For the purposes of diagnosis.

**Interventions:** Advanced testing (MRI w/o contrast, MRI w/ & w/o contrast, CT, CT myelography, Nuclear medicine w/ or w/o SPECT, or PET)

**Comparison:** Gold standard (surgical findings or patient outcome)

**Outcome:** Diagnostic accuracy, positive predictive value, effect on patient management, surgical rate and/or patient outcome.