

Policy Category:

CBA +PA

Who usually applies for funding?

Consultant

Surgical removal of rheumatoid nodules

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| Commissioning decision | The ICB will provide funding for the surgical removal of rheumatoid nodules for patients who meet the criteria defined within this policy. Funding approval for eligible patients must be sought from the ICB via the Prior Approval process prior to treatment. |
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Policy Statement:

Requests for funding will only be approved where one of the following criteria are met:

- Significant pain and/or tenderness of nodules
- OR**
- Complications such as infection and ulceration
- OR**
- Pressure symptoms including nerve compression or pressure on an organ or tissue
- OR**
- Its size or position is causing severe functional impairment of activities of daily living**

** Significant functional impairment is defined by the ICB as:

- Symptoms prevent the patient fulfilling vital work or educational responsibilities
- Symptoms prevent the patient carrying out vital domestic or carer activities

Rationale:

Rheumatoid nodules are usually referred to an orthopaedic surgeon for excision, most commonly a hand surgeon or upper limb surgeon, depending on the site and after the patient has received counselling about the risk of recurrence.

Separate guidelines will apply for excision of rheumatoid nodules in the lung where a differential diagnosis of malignancy is considered.

Plain English Summary:

Rheumatoid nodules are bumps in the bones which are different to other types of lumps on joints called ganglia. Rheumatoid nodules tend to occur in patients with more severe forms of the disease rheumatoid arthritis (RA). They appear most commonly on the elbow, forearm, fingers and thumbs or other bony areas following an injury. They may be painful or may cause no pain at all and may vary in size. If they are removed by surgery, they may appear again after a time. They can be difficult to treat with medicines or injections into the joint area.

Surgery may be an option for people who have painful or large nodules which affect the ability to perform activities of daily living as outlined in this policy.

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Evidence base:

Rheumatoid Nodules: Dermatologic clinics; Jul 2015; vol. 33 (no. 3); p. 361-371 Tilstra, Jeremy S; Lienesch, Douglas W

For further information please contact GLICB.IFR@nhs.net

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Policy sign off:

| Reviewing Body | Date of review |
|---|-----------------------|
| Effective Clinical Commissioning Policy Group | October 2018 |
| Quality and Governance Committee | |

Version Control:

| Version No | Type of Change | Date | Description of Change |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------|---|
| 0.01 | New Policy | 22/11/2018 | n/a |
| 0.02 | Review date Evidence base | 18/05/2021 | Evidence base updated; Review date agreed at 3 years. |