

12 March 2015

MBS Reviews
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To whom it may concern

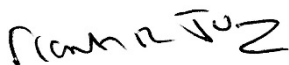
Re: RACGP response to the MBS Reviews Imaging for Low Back Pain Protocol

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the protocol commissioned by the Department of Health. We offer the following comments regarding the protocol:

- The protocol commences with an accurate summary of the epidemiology of lower back pain (LBP) in Australia.
- The working classification of the three categories of LBP is satisfactory for general practice.
- The proposed PICO is appropriate with the exception of the inclusion of 'suspected structural deformity including scoliosis' in the population field as these conditions are rarely disabling or life-threatening, except in their most severe forms and generally have a poor relationship to pain and disability.
- The outcomes relating to treatment and return to work are appropriate.
- We agree that imaging needs to be targeted to avoid harms in terms of radiation exposure and increased disability caused by drawing attention to incidental findings that are unlikely to be linked with the pain.
- The proposed literature search strategy is appropriate. When selecting the evidence-based CPGs and clinical management algorithms, they should be relevant to general practice and other primary care professions involved in the assessment and treatment of low back pain.

The RACGP looks forward to the outcomes of the review and the opportunity to comment on the report arising from the review. If you require any further information regarding the RACGP's response, please contact Joanna Ong on joanna.ong@racgp.org.au.

Yours sincerely



Dr Frank R Jones
President