Did you know?

Cauda Equina Syndrome

What can you do?

NICE clinical knowledge summaries
http://cks.nice.org.uk/back-pain-low-without-radiculopathy#!diagnosisadditional

You can help...

Please send us any experiences and solutions which would be useful for sharing with the NHS via safetyandlearningenquiries@nhsla.com

Other leaflets in the ‘Did you know...’ series are:
- Manual Handling
- National Clinical Assessment Service
- Pressure Ulcers in Maternity
- Surgical Burns
- Venous Thromboembolism

Please note that the NHS Litigation Authority database was designed primarily as a claims management tool rather than for research purposes. It records a limited amount of information and a claim may be multi-factorial and/or settled on a number of bases. Therefore the figures provided should be treated with caution and should not be relied on as a basis for audit or research.
Key causes are due to delays in:
• specialist centre referral;
• diagnosing/recognising symptoms;
• MRI scanning (time, access, referral);
• responding to ‘red flag’ symptoms;
• surgical intervention; and
• transport to hospital or specialist centre.

It may also be as a result of surgery.

If the condition is not addressed at an early stage, it can result in life-changing injuries which are often associated with significant psychological effects.

Cauda Equina Syndrome primary symptoms include:
• bladder/bowel dysfunction;
• loss of sexual function/impotence;
• nerve damage;
• unnecessary pain;
• paralysis/partial paralysis/disability/foot-drop; and
• spinal damage.

In some cases, Cauda Equina Syndrome can contribute to the risk of death.

‘Red flag’ symptoms that require rapid investigation and treatment can include:
• anal and/or buttock numbness;
• bladder or bowel disturbance;
• loss of feeling between the legs (saddle anaesthesia);
• severe back pain; and
• loss of sexual function.