



Medicare Benefits Schedule Review

Diagnostic Imaging—Knee Imaging

This factsheet outlines the key recommendations from the **MBS Review Taskforce's Diagnostic Imaging—Knee Imaging—Clinical Committee** report. For more detailed information on each recommendation, see the [summary for consumers](#) or read all recommendations in the [full report](#).



Number of items
reviewed

22



Number of
recommendations

6

✓ Key recommendations

Addition of age restrictions for GP-requested knee MRIs

Before November 2013 only specialists could request MBS funded knee MRIs. Since then the MBS has provided rebates for GP-requested knee MRIs when performed for acute knee injury, often anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury or cartilage tear is suspected.

Since the introduction of MBS funded GP-requested knee MRIs, there has been a large increase in the number of knee MRIs performed. A large percentage of these are performed for older people. Approximately 45% of GP requested knee MRI services in 2014/15 were performed on patients over 50 years old.

There is evidence that older people with chronic knee pain and osteoarthritis are undergoing GP-requested knee MRIs when this is not the appropriate test—often no test is required.

Limiting GP-requested knee MRI to patients aged less than 50 will target services to age groups that are more likely to have an acute knee injury (often sporting-related). Younger patients are much less likely to have osteoarthritis as a cause for their symptoms.

These proposed changes aim to encourage appropriate use of requested knee MRIs for the best outcomes for patients.

Specialists will still be able to request knee MRIs for all patients.

Improve the use of ultrasound imaging to improve quality care

The Committee is recommending removing the indication of 'injury of collateral ligaments' from the current MBS item descriptors. Diagnosis of collateral ligament injury generally doesn't change treatment. In addition, ultrasound is generally not recommended for this type of injury due to its inability to assess deeper structures.

Improve monitoring of knee CT use

The Committee is proposing a new item be created for CT of the knee. This will make it easier to track how often knee CT is used, which will help future reviews assess whether knee CT is being used appropriately.



Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) uses magnetic fields, radio waves and field gradients to generate internal images.

Ultrasounds send soundwaves of particular frequency to see internal structures.

CTs use narrow beams of quickly rotated X-rays to generate cross-sectional images.

About MBS Review

The MBS Review Taskforce is considering how more than 5,700 services can be aligned with contemporary clinical evidence and practice and improve health outcomes for patients. It is led by a Taskforce of clinicians, health system experts and consumer representatives.