

## **Facet Joint Block or Denervation 脊椎關節注射**

### **Introduction**

Facet joints are joints that link adjacent vertebrae together to form the vertebral column. Like other joints in our body they are subjected to wear and tear as we grow old or when there has been trauma. When there is severe wear and tear in the joints, pain may occur in our back. In some patients with chronic neck or back pain related to facet joint disease, pain relief may be achieved by facet joint block.

### **How does Facet Joint Block or Denervation work?**

There are different methods of facet joint block:

1. Injection of steroid into or around the joint may reduce the inflammatory process in the joint.
2. Injection of local anaesthetic agent to block the pain signal.
3. Destroying the innervating nerves to the facet joints by heating or freezing them to block the pain signal. This method usually last longer than injecting with local anaesthetic.

### **The Procedure**

1. You may be asked to fast for a period of time before the procedure.
2. The procedure is usually performed under local anaesthesia. Sometimes a sedative agent may be administered.
3. An intravenous cannula is first inserted into your vein.
4. You will be asked to lie on your front on the operating table.
5. The procedure site is first disinfected, then local anaesthetic may be because for diagnostic MBB, SC LA should not be given to prevent false positive result injected into the skin.
6. The needle is then inserted on your back/thorax/neck under X-ray guidance to the desired position.
7. You are requested to lie as still as possible during the insertion of needle to prevent any complication.
8. A small amount of X-ray contrast may be injected to confirm correct placement of the needle.
9. Local anesthetic and steroid is then injected into the joint or LA +/- steroid injected to nerve supplying the nerve). Alternatively, the innervating nerves are destroyed by heating or freezing.
10. Depending on the extent of the pain and how many facet joints are involved, more than one injection may be performed.

### **Side effects and Complications**

There are potential side effects and complications, which in most cases are uncommon and may not be serious.

1. There is usually some pain during and after the procedure.
2. On rare occasion, trauma to the nerve root or spinal cord during the insertion of needle may occur. Rarely this may lead to leg weakness and paraplegia.
3. There is also an extremely small risk of convulsion, hypotension and respiratory arrest when local anaesthetic is used for facet joint block in the neck.
4. Bacterial infection due to the procedure is rare as the puncture site has been disinfected before the procedure.

### **Remarks**

This is general information only and the list of complications is not exhaustive. Other unforeseen complications may occasionally occur. In special patient groups, the actual risk may be different. For further information please contact your doctor.