

UK National Screening Committee

Change to current screening in AAA for Subaneurysmal aortas

23 June 2017

Purpose

This document provides background on the item addressing a proposed change to the current recommendation relating to men with subaneurysmal aortas identified within the NHS Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening Programme.

Background

The AAA Screening Programme is currently considering a range of programme optimisation initiatives. One proposal is to include men with aortas measuring 2.5 to 2.9 cm in a lifelong ultrasound surveillance programme. Surveillance is currently provided for men with aortas measuring 3.0 to 5.4 cm as a means of monitoring growth and managing risk.

Screening for AAA can currently produce one of four possible results;

- a normal size aorta measuring less than 3cm in diameter (no further screening is required)
- a small aneurysm measuring between 3.0-4.4 cm (no treatment required but annual scans offered)
- a medium aneurysm measuring between 4.5-5.4 cm (no treatment required but three monthly scans offered)
- a large aneurysms measuring 5.5 cm or larger (referred to a vascular surgeon; possible surgery)

Major changes to screening programmes should be considered by the UK NSC. Internal discussion between the AAA Programme Lead, the UK NSC Director of Programmes and the Evidence Team concluded that an evidence summary addressing key questions would help inform the discussion.

The Ottawa Hospital Research Institute was commissioned to undertake the review. Three questions were addressed:

- Is the epidemiology and natural history of subaneurysmal aortas understood?
- What are the psychological harms associated with screening positive with an abdominal aortic aneurysm and/or entry to a surveillance programme?
- What outcomes relating to surgical intervention have been reported in men who have progressed from subaneurysmal to aneurysmal?



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The review team encountered a very limited body of evidence relevant to each question. The review concluded that further research would be required to support a change to the current recommendation.

The attached review has been fed into the AAA Screening Programme's programme optimisation discussions and a full report will be presented to the UK NSC at its November 2017 meeting.

The review is currently open for public consultation.

Action

The Committee is asked to note the document as part of the report on the AAA programme optimisation work and recommend that the proposed modification to the existing AAA screening programme is not approved.

Should the consultation result in significant concerns about the recommendation then the Committee will reconsider.