

Are NHS-employed musculoskeletal physiotherapists in England mis-diagnosing Cauda Equina Syndrome?

Natalie Beswetherick OBE MCSP MBA FCSP

Director of Practice & Development

CSP

Background

Builds on 2017 study of mis-diagnosis of CES found in independent sector

Sought to quantify prevalence of mis-diagnosis in NHS in England

Claims against NHS physiotherapists in England are dealt with by NHS resolution

Methods

FOI formal request for information submitted to NHS resolution

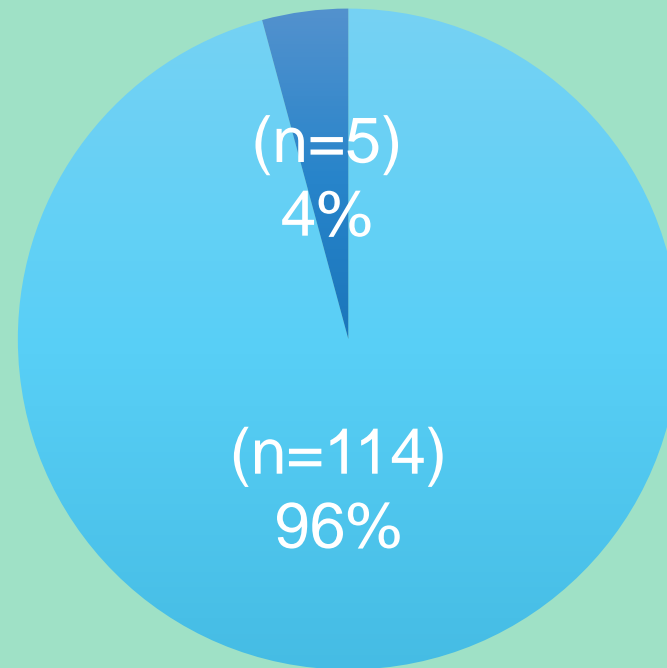
10 years of claims closed or settled searched with cause codes of “wrong/failure/delays in diagnosis”

Free text search for “Cauda Equina”

Restricted search to “physiotherapy”

Results

Cauda Equina claims 2006/7-2016/17



■ Doctors ■ Physios

Conclusions

A small number of claims against NHS physiotherapists were found

Physiotherapists in the NHS and independent sectors are mis-diagnosing CES

Comparison with the previous findings is not possible – different time periods and different coverage

Implications

Results should be treated with caution

NHS resolution database is not designed as a research tool

Claims can be multi-factorial & settled on a number of bases

Further dissemination of these findings is required