

# MBS Update

## Nuclear cardiology

### New MBS items for nuclear cardiology

As part of the MBS review of cardiac imaging services, new myocardial perfusion image (MPI) items and descriptors were introduced on 1st August, 2020.

#### New MPI items and descriptors

Some of the detailed descriptors are similar to those being introduced for stress echo (SE). The MPI items now apply to patients presenting with symptoms of cardiac ischaemia in particular scenarios where SE is deemed suboptimal. One of the following must now apply:

- i. If a patient has a body habitus or other physical condition(s), including heart rhythm disturbance, where a SE would not provide adequate information. [This may include obesity, atrial fibrillation, ventricular arrhythmias, and some types of structural heart disease (including resting LV dysfunction). These are just some suggestions and the list is not exhaustive or prescriptive.]
- ii. If the patient is unable to exercise adequately. [Patient safety during an SE is of paramount concern.]
- iii. If the patient has had a failed SE (in the last 24 months).

#### Additional clinical indications

Subject to the above item requirements, MBS Note IR 4.1 also sets out the additional clinical indications in which the MPI item number may apply. These include any one or more of the following:

- i. symptoms of typical or atypical angina (precipitated by physical exertion or relieved by rest or GTN),
- ii. known CAD with symptoms not controlled by therapy or evolving since the last functional study,
- iii. resting ECG changes suggestive of ischaemia in a patient without known CAD,
- iv. dyspnoea of unknown aetiology (when assessed by a specialist or physician) which could be due to painless ischaemia,
- v. pre-operative assessment before intermediate/high risk surgery, in patients with poor exercise capacity, and where at least one other specified condition is present (IHD, previous MI, heart failure, stroke or TIA, renal dysfunction or diabetes mellitus requiring insulin therapy),
- vi. quantification of extent/severity of ischemia prior to percutaneous coronary intervention or coronary bypass surgery,

cont. over



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## New MBS items for nuclear cardiology (cont.)

- vii. quantification of viability of myocardium in cases of known infarction,
- viii. where ischaemia is possible in a post-surgical (congenital heart lesions) patient,
- ix. assessment of patients under 17 years (pre and post cardiac surgery) with coronary anomalies or coronary artery abnormality, and
- x. where perfusion abnormality is suspected but the patient's cognitive capacity or expressive language impairs accurate assessment on medical history.

## Rest perfusion items

New rest perfusion items for assessment of myocardial viability, in patients with LV systolic dysfunction and probable/confirmed CAD, are now available (rest MIBI or rest/redistribution thallium scans).

## No repeat study in 24 months

Another major change is that MPI cannot be repeated in the following 24 months, UNLESS, the patient has undergone a revascularisation procedure and now presents with evolving or refractory cardiac ischaemic symptoms. There is a new MBS item for a repeat study under this clause.

## Clinical indications on image request form

To comply with MBS guidelines, the request form must identify the symptom(s) or clinical indications which meet the new descriptor.

To assist practitioners, we have developed a myocardial perfusion image request available at [i-med.com.au/mbs-updates-list](http://i-med.com.au/mbs-updates-list)

## Any questions?

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about the new MBS legislation, or whether a particular patient qualifies.

### Geographic Exemption (MM3-7 regional and remote areas)

There are some exemptions from the new requirements for areas classified under the Modified Monash (MM) system as being located in Areas 3 – 7. These exemptions apply where there is no stress echo facility available in the area. If there is a stress echo facility within the MM area, then the exemption will not apply. The MM Area boundaries can be viewed at:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/health-workforce-locator/health-workforce-locator>

MM3-7 areas, however, are generally still subject to the 24 month restriction, that is, MPI cannot be repeated in the following 24 months.

The full item descriptor(s) and information on other changes to the MBS can be found on the MBS Online website at [www.mbsonline.gov.au](http://www.mbsonline.gov.au)

