

## **CyberKnife® Radiosurgery - Letter to Insurers (Public or Private)**

Medilux Healthcare Ltd. promotes advanced treatment centres and non-invasive medical technologies. We do not examine or diagnose patients, nor do we advise on individual cases. We provide information and facilitate enquiries from patients or their doctors to a choice of CyberKnife centres internationally but all clinical decisions are made by the centres without reference to us.

Dear Insurer,

Your member has investigated CyberKnife non-invasive radiosurgery on our website [www.cyberknifeservice.com](http://www.cyberknifeservice.com) and is seeking confirmation of cover with you.

Our website provides details about CyberKnife, the range of cancer, non-cancer and neurosurgical interventions which are offered and how CyberKnife centres assess patients for treatment. Applications for assessment or treatment start with enquiry through our on-line form, to a choice of up to three centres.

Some countries do not yet have CyberKnife though it is now available in 26 countries around the world. As with any operative procedure, individual centres also vary in approach, depending upon the additional medical hardware and software purchased and the experience and expertise of the surgeons concerned.

Sometimes the best CyberKnife centre for a particular patient is not their nearest one and costs can vary substantially between centres and countries. However patients enquiring through MHL have access to first class, modern centres in Germany (Munich) or Switzerland (Zurich), France (Lyon), Greece (Athens) and India (Bangalore). Munich and Zurich offer fixed price treatments and the others offer variable prices, however all are usually well below UK levels and very substantially below US levels.

Questions sometimes raised by insurers are:

### **1) Is CyberKnife an established and proven procedure?**

The first treatments were for brain and then for spine and these are now well established. Treatments for other body areas have been added progressively and whilst some of these are also now well-established, others are less so and/or form part of a wider treatment plan. Several centres have now installed a second CyberKnife to cope with rising demand. The manufacturers, Accuray Inc state:

‘The CyberKnife system is based on radiation technology that has been proven for over 30 years and in 2001 it received FDA clearance for treatment of tumours anywhere in the body where radiation was indicated. Since then CyberKnife users have developed and continue to develop protocols for treating tumours in the brain, spine, lungs, liver, pancreas, kidney, and prostate.

CyberKnife treatments have demonstrated promising results, with more than 451 clinical and technical articles published as of March 31, 2010. Additionally major medical conferences worldwide have featured presentations on the clinical effectiveness of CyberKnife System for both intracranial and extracranial tumours, and how CyberKnife treatments minimise side effects to preserve a patient’s quality of life.

To date, more than 100,000 patients have been treated and more than 220 systems are installed worldwide’.

See the manufacturers’ web site <http://www.cyberknife.com/for-your-doctor/index.aspx> and <http://www.cyberknife.com/reimbursement-insurance/index.aspx>

### **2) CyberKnife is an attractive treatment option but is the cost too high?**

This may be considered in two alternative scenarios:

#### **i) CyberKnife v conventional surgery**

In most cases CyberKnife is a non-invasive procedure without the need for anaesthesia and frequently hotel accommodation is all that is required. Compared to open surgery there are therefore huge savings on hospital and theatre costs, intensive care and much lower risks of infection and subsequent complications and readmissions.

## **ii) CyberKnife v leaving untreated**

In some cases conventional surgery is not feasible without undue risk to the patient, but CyberKnife can be used because of its high precision and non-invasive nature. In these cases the costs of treatment by CyberKnife should be weighed against the costs of not treating.

Apart from the personal cost to the patient, failure to treat the case as presenting may result in a variety of further incidents causing acute admissions, with attendant Consultants' fees, investigations, hospital charges, nursing and ancillary healthcare costs, perhaps over a protracted period.

## **3) Policies may not specifically cover treatment outside the patient's home country.**

Where this is so, insurers should still think carefully before rejecting a patient's claim for reimbursement. It may be less expensive, as well as better for the patient, to fund CyberKnife treatment in another country rather than to force the patient into less appropriate or ultimately more expensive treatment at home or to leave the patient untreated.

The cost of CyberKnife treatment varies substantially between countries but it is usually a painless, non-invasive process. Many patients therefore regard travelling to another country as a very minor inconvenience in order to secure treatment. In most cases they can fly home afterwards without any need for protracted convalescence and in fact many local patients simply walk or catch the bus home afterwards.

In these circumstances insurers may find it most appropriate to fund CyberKnife treatment on a discretionary basis, up to a certain level and for patients to travel to a more economical, but still first class specialist centre abroad for treatment.

## **The most appropriate CyberKnife Centre, at a competitive price**

MHL's service allows patients or their doctors to consider responses from a choice of centres, to be sure that they find a centre which is right for their condition, be it local or otherwise. It also allows them to compare costs at different centres, of CyberKnife and any other treatments which may be required.

Because we have negotiated very attractive fixed prices at some centres, the cost of treatment, even in a normally high-priced location such as Switzerland, can be much lower than in the patient's own country.

## **Enquiries**

If you have general enquiries regarding CyberKnife or about our services you will find most answers at [www.cyberknifeservice.com](http://www.cyberknifeservice.com) For further information or to subscribe to our newsletter please e-mail [enquiries@cyberknifeservice.com](mailto:enquiries@cyberknifeservice.com)

Please feel free to enquire with us as to rates which may apply for particular treatments, at any of the centres which we feature.

Yours sincerely,

Phillip Stacey

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