

Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) Application 1428: Mechanical thrombectomy (MT) for acute ischaemic stroke

What is mechanical thrombectomy and acute ischaemic stroke?

Acute ischaemic stroke is a sudden interruption of blood supply to the brain caused by a blood clot (thrombus) in the brain. Mechanical thrombectomy removes clots using a device that is guided via a small tube (catheter) into the large arteries of the brain. The device removes blood clots, restoring blood flow to the brain minimising brain tissue damage.

Why was the application for MBS funding supported?

MSAC considered a range of clinical and economic reasons to support listing the procedure on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS). The committee recommended that the procedure be listed because:

- it is safe and;
- it is more effective and safe than other alternate treatments.

What alternatives are available?

Alternatives, such as drug therapy, are available.

What happens next?

The Australian Government has decided to follow MSAC's recommendation and the procedure is now funded by Medicare and listed as item 35414 on the MBS (www.mbsonline.gov.au).

What out-of-pockets expenses are involved?

Each service listed in the MBS has a unique item number along with a description of the service and the Medicare fee. The amount of rebate for the Medicare service differs depending on whether the service is provided in hospital (75% of the Medicare fee) or out of hospital (85% of the Medicare fee). Medicare benefits do not always cover the full costs of treatment. Doctors may bill patients above the Medicare rebate, and this leads to a gap between the Medicare benefits paid to the patient and doctors' fee. If a patient has private health insurance (for in hospital services only), this will cover some or all of this gap. Patients should ensure they are aware of all costs involved in their treatment, including out-of-pocket costs, before they receive it. For MBS services performed out-of-hospital, Medicare Safety Nets provide families and singles with an additional benefit, once an annual limit (or threshold) is reached. Further information about Medicare Safety Nets is at:

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/medicare-safety-net>

Where can I find out more?

A full summary of MSAC's decision is at www.msac.gov.au

People should talk with their doctor if they have any concerns about their health. Every Australian citizen, and some other people, are entitled to free public hospital care under Medicare. Patients with private health insurance can retain the right to be treated as either public or private patients in public hospitals.