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## **Evaluation and Management of Sciatica Discomfort in Pregnancy**

**1. Definition of Key Clinical Information:** Sciatica nerve pain can present itself in pregnancy. It can cause pain that radiates from the lower back/buttocks area down your leg. Sciatica can be caused by loosened ligaments, a shift in the center of gravity due to fetal growth, and/or the baby's position. Sciatica nerve pain typically only affects one side of the body. It is a common pregnancy discomfort.

### **2. Assessment**

**i. Risk Factors** Discuss with the pregnant parent symptoms they may be experiencing.

Is there some physical indicators as to what may be causing the pain? This may be decreased physical activity in pregnant parent, tight ligaments, baby's positions, etc...

**ii. Subjective Symptoms** Pregnant parent may have difficulty walking or standing as the pinched nerve may aggravate during these times. May have pain getting in and out of bed. And difficulty moving positions at night.

**iii. Objective Signs** Due to sciatica nerve pain pregnant parent may have pain on one side of the body where the sciatica nerve is pinched.

**iv. Clinical Impressions** Pregnant parent can start to introduce certain exercises that can alleviate the pain and discomfort. Some of these exercises include stretches such as butterfly sitting, squatting, using heat/ice therapy, topical medications, and walking.

**v. Clinical Test Considerations** Refer the pregnant parent to a primary care Doctor to rule out any underlying injuries or serious medical concerns.

**vi. Differential Diagnosis** Educate pregnant parent on techniques and exercises that may alleviate pain this can also include prenatal massage, chiropractic care or acupuncture, and sleeping positions.

### **3. Management plan**

**i. Therapeutic measures to consider within the CPM scope** Magnesium may help with nerve transition and muscle relaxation. It can also help with nerve regeneration. The client can see a chiropractor to help with the release of pressure in the pelvic area and adjust the baby's position. Myofascial release therapy, TENS unit, arnica ointment/oil, prenatal yoga, and eating anti-inflammatory foods.

#### **ii. Therapeutic measures commonly used by other practitioners**

Pregnant parents' primary care provider can refer to an orthopedist after delivery for x-rays, or scans to rule out any injuries or other medical indications. Doctors may also prescribe muscle relaxers, or other medication to help ease pain and discomfort.

**iii. Ongoing care** Follow up with the client on the status of pain and discuss if the suggested information has helped reduce the pain. Check-in to see if other referrals may be needed.

#### **iv. Indications for Consult, Collaboration, or Referral**

- Orthopedist
- Primary Care Doctor
- Physical Therapist
- Chiropractor
- Acupuncturist
- Massage Therapy

#### **v. Client and family education**

Handouts on physical activity that alleviates pain, stretches, nutrition information and aides (TENS unit, heat/ice packs, homeopathy creams, etc...)

## **4. References**

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