CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE: Thoraco-Lumbar Spine

STANDARD

1. Identify the appropriate imaging modality to screen patients for thoraco-lumbar spine injuries

2. Identify which patients require radiographic screening for thoraco-lumbar spine injuries

DEFINITIONS:

Thoraco-lumbar spine fractures result from high-energy trauma. These injuries are often associated with additional serious injuries. CT scans represent the standard for imaging.

GUIDELINES:

1. CT scan of the entire spine is indicated for patients with blunt trauma, suspect spinal injury, altered level of consciousness, impaired patient, distracting injuries or high-energy mechanism of injury.

2. Clinical examination without radiographic studies is indicated in the absence of the criteria found above.

3. An MRI and spine service consult are indicated if the CT is suggestive of neurologic involvement and of gross neurologic deficits.

MONITORING PERFORMANCE IN PI PROGRAM

None

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