

Pembroke Medical Group

Policy: Sedation for Radiological Imaging

It is not uncommon for patients to request prescriptions for sedative medications (such as diazepam or 'Valium') when they are undergoing radiological procedures such as MRIs. Unfortunately, this is not something we are able to do for the following reasons:

Sedation Management

Patients who are sedated should be regularly monitored. We are aware of a case report where a GP-provided sedation was given, the patient was not monitored, and subsequently had a respiratory arrest in an MRI machine.

Benzodiazepines

Benzodiazepines such as 2mg diazepam are probably sub-therapeutic for most adults for any effective sedation. Equally they can sometimes have an idiosyncratic response in patients, and even very small doses can sometimes cause agitation.

Timing of Sedation

A patient may take a sedative 'an hour' before their assumed procedure, only to find their procedure has been delayed, leading to unpredictable dosing requirements.

GP Involvement

GPs are not regularly involved, skilled, trained or appraised in sedation skills. Hospital consultants, both those requesting imaging and those providing it, have access to the same prescribing abilities as GPs.

Guidelines

The Royal College of Radiologists' own guidelines on sedation for imaging makes no mention of GP involvement or provision of low dose sedatives. It also stresses the importance of experienced well-trained staff being involved with and monitoring sedated patients. [Sedation, analgesia and anaesthesia in the radiology department, Second edition | The Royal College of Radiologists \(rcr.ac.uk\)](#)

Where the referral for imaging is made by our practice, we will try to highlight on the referral that an assessment for support by the radiology team may be beneficial.