

Polymyalgia Rheumatica





Pathophysiology

Recognition

Decision making aids

Investigation

Onwards referral

Polymyalgia Rheumatica



Acute onset Bilat shoulder (90%) and/or bilat buttock pain

Bilat shoulder and/or bilat pelvic girdle stiffness

Symptoms worse in the early morning >45 mins

Peak onset age 65

Extremely uncommon prior to age 50

3:1 Female:Male

Raised CRP and/or ESR

Family History PMR

23% have synovitis

1/3 develop RA

Positive Features

Acute onset (new) bilat. Shoulder
and or Buttock pain

Early morning stiffness lasting 45+
mins

Night pain with severe stiffness

Fever, weightloss, fatigue

Age 50+

Raised ESR and/or CRP

Negative features

Positive anti-ccp or RF or ANA etc
(other clinical diseases more likely)

Presence of peripheral arthritis

Presence of headache, jaw
claudication, visual symptoms (GCA)

Table 3. European League Against Rheumatism and American College of Rheumatology Provisional Classification Criteria for Polymyalgia Rheumatica

Required Criteria

- Age ≥ 50 years
- Bilateral shoulder pain
- Abnormal erythrocyte sedimentation rate and/or C-reactive protein

Criteria for scoring algorithm*

Clinical criteria	Points
Morning stiffness lasting >45 minutes	2
Hip pain or restricted range of motion	1
Negative rheumatoid factor and anti-citrullinated protein antibody	2
Absence of other joint involvement	1
Ultrasound criteria	Points
≥ 1 shoulder with subdeltoid bursitis, biceps tenosynovitis, or glenohumeral synovitis AND ≥ 1 hip with synovitis or trochanteric bursitis	1
Both shoulders with subdeltoid bursitis, biceps tenosynovitis, or glenohumeral synovitis	1

*Using only clinical criteria, a score of ≥ 4 had a 68% sensitivity and 78% specificity for discriminating patients with PMR from comparison subjects. Using a combination of clinical criteria and ultrasound criteria, a score of ≥ 5 had a sensitivity of 66% and specificity of 81% for discriminating patients with PMR from comparison subjects.

PMR, polymyalgia rheumatica

GP managed

Refer to Rheumatology?

MSK Therapists



Differential Diagnosis



Rheumatoid Arthritis

Giant Cell/Temporal Arteritis

Persistent pain conditions

Upper trapezius myalgia

GCA/Temporal Arteritis



Medical Emergency – A&E

Temporal Headache – usually unilateral

Scalp Pain

Jaw Claudication

Visual Disturbance – transient unilateral visual loss, blurring, diplopia

Polymyalgicsymptoms

Limb claudication

Polymyalgia Rheumatica

