

Thoracoscopic Sympathectomy

ICD10 Code: R61; R61.1; R61.9; R61.0 (Hyperhidrosis)
173.0 (Raynaud's)
G56.4 (Causalgia)
173.8; 173.9; 174.2; 174.9 (Vascular)
R52.1; K86.0; K86.1 (Pancreatic pain)

SAMA Code: 2846, 2847, 2848, 1179

Definition: A procedure where the sympathetic chain is resected, ablated or divided using a thoracoscope.

Indication For Procedure: Hyperhidrosis of the hands and or axilla – commonest indication. Occasionally facial sweating or blushing, hyperhidrosis of feet. Approximately 1% of the population will develop excessive sweating. Conservative measures that can be tried before surgery include antiperspirants, aluminium chloride powder (Drichlor), iontophoresis and botox injections. Surgery indicated if it interferes with work, quality of life, social interaction etc.
Raynaud's disease – in sever cases.
Reflex sympathetic dystrophy
Upper extremity ischaemia
Splanchnicectomy for pancreatic pain

Both sides can be done at the same sitting or sequentially a week or two apart.

Contraindications: Severe pleural adhesions
Inability to tolerate one lung ventilation

Pre-Operative Investigations: None

HOSPITALISATION:

• **Pre-op admission days:** Nil

• **Theatre Requirements:** Video-endoscopic equipment
Equipment for conversion to thoracotomy

• **Length of stay (LOS):** One day

• **Instrumentation** Atelectasis
Haemothorax and/or Pneumothorax
Chylothorax
Horner's syndrome
Compensatory hyperhidrosis usually on the trunk and/or thighs. This is also the reason that 4 limb sympathectomy is usually contra indicated.

Complications: Horner's syndrome <5% of cases
Compensatory sweating – 20-80% in different series
Paraesthesia <1%
Bleeding and infection <1%
Incisional pain similar to post-thoracotomy neuralgia 1-2%
Rarely injury to lung, esophagus, mediastinal structures, chylothorax.
Bradycardia risk in pre-existing heart rhythm disturbances.

Level of Care: 3

Ancillary Services: Physiotherapy

Post Operative Investigations: CXR

Certifications: Fellowship or Masters degree in general surgery or thoracic surgery.

References:

Reviewed by: Dr Danie Folscher

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