



British Scoliosis Society

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British Scoliosis Society Executive

Updated Position Statement on Vertebral Body Tethering (VBT) for Scoliosis (January 2020)

Vertebral body tethering (VBT) is a relatively new technique that has been introduced in a small number of centres around the world. At the most recent annual meeting of the British Scoliosis Society, in Cardiff in November 2019, VBT was widely discussed and was the focus of several podium presentations, a keynote lecture from a current VBT practitioner and a structured debate on the benefits and risks.

The British Scoliosis Society continues to closely follow the developments in vertebral body tethering. As before, we support NHS England (NHSE) in their ongoing assessment of VBT and its suitability as a procedure for the United Kingdom. We are aware that NHSE is still concerned about the lack of evidence for VBT despite the frequent use of VBT outside of the UK. We are aware that the FDA has approved one type of VBT implant and hope that this will encourage good data and evidence to be published and so help patients, carers, BSS and NHSE come to a balanced conclusion as to the suitability of this procedure for growing children with scoliosis.

To date, review of available data has identified a reoperation rate of approximately 11% for VBT and complication rates of approximately 20% (depending on criteria used). This evidence is still developing but certainly supports that VBT should be evaluated like every other new surgical procedure to make sure it is suitable.

BSS maintains its previous position of supporting a robust review of VBT and its suitability for patients. It also supports a controlled introduction of VBT into the UK within a structure that allows continued evaluation to ensure the safety of patients and the best outcome that can be achieved.