

BSCN Position Statement: Hand held devices for Carpal Tunnel Investigation

Hand-held devices are increasingly being promoted for nerve conduction studies in the United Kingdom, mostly for patients with carpal tunnel syndrome being treated in one-stop hand surgery clinics where testing is often performed by staff without recognised professional training in clinical neurophysiology.

BSCN Council has considered the implication of this practice under its remit of promoting the specialty of clinical neurophysiology and makes the following points, which if not fulfilled should be considered sub-standard and cannot be recommended to Commissioners:

- 1) The validity and interpretation of neurophysiological tests, which should always be undertaken in clinical context, depend more on the skills and competencies of the individual performing the test than on the technical quality of the recording equipment. The required competencies are set out in [BSCN clinical practice guidelines](#)
- 2) With relation to Carpal Tunnel Syndrome it should be recognized that the rationale for clinical neurophysiological evaluation is not simply to confirm or refute the clinical diagnosis. Testing should determine the severity of the neuropathy in a way that informs prognosis and helps select the appropriate treatment. It should also establish the presence of alternative or coexisting nerve disease, which may influence the treatment and prognosis.
- 3) The BSCN and American Association of Neuromuscular and Electrodiagnostic Medicine guidelines for the investigation of carpal tunnel syndrome (Muscle & Nerve 2011;44:597-607) require a combination of motor and sensory nerve conduction studies and a sensitive comparative test.

Version 2 (25 July 2013)