

ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM



1. What is it?

Abnormal dilation in a weakened or diseased arterial wall of the Aorta. Many AAA's are asymptomatic, however, there is a possibility it could get bigger and rupture causing life threatening bleeding. AAA is one type of visceral disease that may cause low back pain in rare cases.

2. Clinical symptoms/suspicion



- Non mechanical back pain with associated abdominal pain
- May have pulsating mass in the abdomen
- >60 years
- Associated risk factors

3. Additional Characteristics

Unruptured: May have vague abdominal + back pain from pressure on adjacent structures. Generally asymptomatic.

Ruptured: Sudden onset of mid abdomen, flank and back pain and a pulsatile abdominal mass.

4. Risk factors

- Male
- Smoker
- Artherosclerosis
- Family history of AAA
- Hypertension
- Obesity



5. Management

- A ruptured AAA is a medical emergency and should be transferred to hospital immediately
- If an unruptured AAA is suspected, refer to GP for urgent investigations.

A rare differential to be aware of in primary care.

