

## Endoscopy Unit

# Cholangioscopy Information – supplementary test to ERCP

This information leaflet should be read together with Patient Information booklet on Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangio-pancreatography (ERCP): The procedure explained

### What is a cholangioscopy?

Cholangioscopy is the endoscopy procedure for examination of the bile duct. It is an add-on test carried out with ERCP. It is carried out with a cholangioscope. This is essentially a mini-scope that can be passed through an ERCP endoscope channel.

### What are the benefits?

#### 1. Biopsies of a stricture (narrowing) within the bile duct

A stricture in the bile duct may be due to benign scarred tissue or sometimes a tumour. The cholangioscope can be advanced into the bile duct to directly visualise the stricture area. The cholangioscope itself has a mini-channel through which a mini-biopsy forcep can be introduced. This enables targeted biopsies of the stricture, which allows accurate diagnosis of the cause of the stricture.

#### 2. Treatment of large bile duct stones

The ERCP endoscopy procedure is commonly performed to remove gallstones within the bile duct. Some stones are difficult to remove due to their large sizes, or due to narrowing at the lower end of the bile duct. The cholangioscope can be advanced into the bile duct.

A probe is passed down the mini-channel to perform lithotripsy - breaking



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the large stones into smaller fragments. This process is called electrohydraulic lithotripsy (EHL). The smaller stone fragments can then be removed with conventional ERCP methods. The UHCW specialist pancreatico-biliary team offers EHL as a treatment option for difficult to treat bile duct stones. Some EHL procedures may require general anaesthetic. Follow up procedures or clinic appointments will be arranged.

### **Are there any significant risks?**

The cholangioscopy procedure involves risks similar to those of ERCP – bleeding, pancreatitis and cholangitis (infection of the bile duct).

To reduce the risk of pancreatitis, you will be given Indomethacin (or another anti-inflammatory medication) in a rectal suppository unless there is any reason not to, and intravenous fluid at the end of the procedure.

To reduce the risk of cholangitis, you will be given an injection dose of antibiotics, and a course of oral antibiotics to take home.

### **Are there other differences to the ERCP procedure?**

The addition of cholangioscopy typically increases the normal duration of ERCP procedure. Top up or higher doses of sedative and analgesia medications are given.

### **Further information**

National Institute for Health and Care (NICE) has published an Interventional procedure guidance on EHL in May 2021. Please refer to the information sheet “NICE Information for the public” for further guidance.

If you have any other questions, please contact the Endoscopy Unit on 024766807 /02476966806

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## Patient Information

To give feedback on this leaflet please email [feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk](mailto:feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk)

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