Algorithm 3: selecting people 16 and over for imaging of the cervical spine

Person 16 or over presenting to the emergency department with a head injury

Are any of these high-risk factors present:

- a GCS score of 12 or less on initial assessment
- intubation
- a definitive diagnosis of cervical spine injury is needed urgently (for example, if cervical spine manipulation is needed during surgery or anaesthesia)
- clinical suspicion of cervical spine injury and other body areas are being scanned for a head injury or multiregion trauma
- they are alert and stable, there is suspicion of cervical spine injury and any of these factors:
 - age 65 years or over
 - dangerous mechanism of injury (fall from a height of more than 1 m or 5 stairs, axial load to the head such as from diving, high-speed motor vehicle collision, rollover motor accident, ejection from a motor vehicle, accident involving motorised recreational vehicles, bicycle collision)
 - focal peripheral neurological deficit
 - paraesthesia in the upper or lower limbs

