

MYOFASCIAL PAIN SYNDROME OF THE LOWER BACK AND TREATMENT USING A SEQUENCED PROTOCOL

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Introduction

Myofascial Pain Syndrome (MPS) is a common source of low back pain, neck pain, shoulder girdle pain, chest pain and rib pain. Primary myofascial pain is not associated with any known etiology; secondary myofascial pain may be associated with significant osteoporosis, degenerative disk disease, postsurgical states, or other medical conditions. The hallmark of myofascial pain syndrome is the presence of a taut band within a trigger point in a skeletal muscle.

Aim

The aim of this study was to estimate the prevalence and to describe the clinical features and outcome of treatment of MPS of the lower back among cases of Work Related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WRMSD).

Materials and Methods

This retrospective study covered 7385 clients diagnosed with WRMSD, with a mean age 30 ± 5.92 years. The relevant clinical data were extracted from the treatment chart of WRMSD patients who received treatment at a Rehabilitation Centre. A single Rehabilitation Physician performed the clinical assessment and made the diagnosis of MPS using the modified Simons Criteria. All the clients received a sequenced, multidisciplinary treatment protocol incorporating manual therapy techniques including trigger point therapy, muscle energy technique etc, mind body approaches and exercises.

Results

Low back was the second commonest region affected with 46% of the total population. Among the subjects with low back pain 61% were diagnosed to have MPS of the lower back. Among the cases of MPS, 75% were male and 25% were female. 41% of the participants were working for 8-12 hours. The commonest job categories of the participants were Managerial (28%), Software Engineers (27%) and Application Engineers (22%). Prolonged sitting with static loading of the lower back was found to be the commonest risk factor. Commonest co morbidities were neck pain, upper back pain, leg and foot pain. Significant reduction in pain or discomfort ($P < 0.05$) was noted among the subjects following a sequenced rehabilitation protocol.

Conclusion

In view of the high prevalence of MPS in this study, clinical practitioners dealing with low back conditions need to be familiar with the current approaches to diagnose and manage MPS. Manual therapy techniques along with mind body approaches, exercise and ergonomics was found to be an effective method of treatment of MPS of the lower back.

Discussion

The study revealed that MPS was one of the major causes of LBP. Good palpation skills and awareness of MPS in the differential diagnosis of LBP could help in the successful non invasive management of LBP. The study also revealed the importance of sequenced protocol based therapy in the treatment of MPS.

Keywords

Myofascial Pain Syndrome, Low Back Pain, Prevalence