

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXTRACORPOREAL SHOCKWAVE THERAPY FOR CHRONIC PLANTAR FASCIITIS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Wirix L., Walgraeve J., Soete H., De Schepper J.

Background: Plantar fasciitis is the most common source of heel pain. In many cases, conservative therapy offers hardly any solution. Surgery, on the other hand, is effective in the small proportion of patients and has many side effects. Thus, there is a need for a reliable therapy which can be used after unsuccessful conservative therapy. Because there is lack of clarity, literature was examined so the caregivers will have a clear answer to the questions and needs of their patients.

Methods: Literature was being extracted from The Cochrane Library, Medline and the Web of Science. Baseline screening was being performed for relevance on title and abstract. Following keywords were used, singly or in combination: ESWT, PLANTAR FASCIITIS, SHOCKWAVE. To maximize the search, backward chaining of reference lists from retrieved papers was also undertaken. After that, a second evaluation, focusing on scientific reliability, was performed, using the validated CBO-guidelines. After screening and selecting, articles with a score equal or higher than eight (out of ten) were further analysed and described.

Results: Literature doesn't provide clear evidence to substantiate the use of ESWT. There are many variable characteristics and the success itself seems inconsistent. As seen in table 1, only five out of nine top ranked authors report positive results.

Discussion: Published literature differs too much in characteristics of subjects, therapy and follow-up to draw clear conclusions from the data.

Conclusion: As there is clearly conflicting evidence, the need for further research, a large-scale trial which tests the internal differences in a more systematic, scientific manner arises.