

Shockwave Therapy for Plantar Fasciitis : Retrospective Study

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The aim of this study was to evaluate the efficacy and safety of extracorporeal shock wave therapy for the treatment of plantar fasciitis in three Brazilian Orthopaedics Clinics.

In a multi-center, retrospective study, the effect of shockwave therapy was investigated in 142 cases of plantar fasciitis in 130 patients treated in the 51-month period from March 2001 to June 2005. Twelve patients received bilateral treatment. There were 67 women and 63 men with an average age of 55 (range, 25-90) years. The criteria for inclusion were at least three months of unsuccessful conservative therapy or six months of pain. Criteria for exclusion were inflammatory arthritis, corticosteroid injection within the previous 6 weeks, acute infection, neurological abnormality, gout, malignant diseases, blood coagulation disorders and ruptures of the plantar fascia. Each patient was treated with 1,200 – 1,500 shock waves, a 20 mm focus depth, and with an energy flux density of no more than 0.14 mJ/mm² after local anaesthesia or ankle block. One treatment was performed in 128 cases, 11 cases underwent a second treatment and 3 underwent a third treatment. The subjects were evaluated by means of a clinical evaluation according to Roles and Maudsley score and subjective outcome on Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) analysis, 45, 90 and 180 days after the end of the therapy.

The study showed the efficacy and safety of ESWT were excellent in 36%, good in 33%, acceptable in 11.3%, and poor in 19.7%, 180 days after ESWT.