

Achilles tendinopathy: Treatment by extracorporeal shockwaves

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Device and producing company:

Reflectron - HMT

Introduction:

To evaluate the safety and effectiveness of ESWT in the treatment of Achilles tendinopathy in three Brazilian orthopedic centers.

Methods:

From May 2002 to February 2006, 118 cases with chronic Achilles tendinopathy were treated. The age of the patients was between 33 and 87 years (average age = 56 years). There were 104 patients, 14 with bilateral treatment; 37 women and 67 men. Inclusion criteria: pain for at least 6 months, three months of unsuccessful conservative treatment and failed surgical procedure. The exclusion criteria were: inflammatory arthritis, corticosteroid injection within the previous 6 weeks, neurological abnormality, gout, malignant diseases, blood coagulation disorders and Achilles rupture. The treatments were performed with an electrohydraulic device (REFLECTRON®). One treatment was performed on 105 cases, 9 underwent a second treatment and 4 cases underwent a third treatment. The subjects were evaluated by means of a clinical evaluation according to Roles and Maudsley score and Visual Analogue Scale analysis 45, 90 and 180 days after the end of the therapy.

Results:

The study showed the efficacy of ESWT was excellent in 26.27%, good in 44.92%, acceptable in 16.95%, and poor in 11.86%, 180 days after ESWT.

Discussion: ESWT must be considered as an alternative in the treatment of Achilles tendinopathy which has been resistant to conventional procedures.

Conclusion: ESWT has the advantages of being non-invasive: no significant complications, lower operating costs, and eliminating the substantial potential risks of traditional surgical procedures.