

Flow analysis of out-patient activity: one-year report. Reflections on shock-wave therapy indications.

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Device and producing company:

Ossatron OSA 140, HMT s.r.l.

Introduction:

Shock-wave therapy (ESWT), as used for various recently introduced treatments carried out in specialist centres, is often misinterpreted. This could be due to a certain lack of awareness by general practitioners or specialists on this type of therapy or simply due to an incorrect diagnosis or the decision to treat similar pathologies with less expensive and more available therapies. We have recently performed a systematic review of our clinical cases evaluated over a one-year period in our ESWT out-patient clinic.

Methods:

We reported all referrals to the ESWT service to the Azienda Ospedaliera of Lodi in 2007; for each medical examination we recorded the diagnosis, previous treatment, the appropriateness of the request and the patient's clinical situation at the time of the visit, and therapy decided on.

Results: Soft tissue pathologies make up more than 90% of ESWT requests; shoulder tendinopathy being the most frequent complaint, followed by plantar fasciitis and elbow lateral epicondylitis. ESWT was used on only half of the patients examined.

Discussion: We noted that ESWT was all too often proposed as initial treatment and, in a large number of cases, we found discrepancies with the patient's real clinical situation. ESWT was used on far fewer cases than initially brought to our attention.

Conclusion: According to our data, we have discovered a serious lack of information on the real indications of ESWT among GPs and even among many specialists. As a result, in order avoid possible legal issues, physicians who perform ESWT should be extremely careful about treating patients who may have been diagnosed incorrectly.