



A Possible Innovative Treatment for Compartment Syndrome

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Background

Compartment syndrome is a painful condition in chronic form, with general recovery time estimated at three months. In my case, pain was brought on as a result of overuse (running, with more recent running on hills, and other sporting activities) combined with the daily use of a patella stabiliser support. The condition responded to dry needling combined with the use of a compression sheath and daily icing, massage and elevation on the affected anterior tibial muscle in a positive manner over a one-month period. During this time, I also rested consistently on a daily basis, with the exception of ocean swimming.

Hypothesis

As an experimental measure, and in conjunction with the use of the stabilising sheath, I bound the affected area with the same patella stabiliser band. This was found to have two effects: firstly, a dramatic short-term reduction in pain, resulting in increased mobility, and secondly, an accelerated recovery time. A full fitness took place six weeks after the initial injury.

Discussion

This success is based on an unproven but possibly significant hypothesis that the initial patella stabiliser band use resulted in a decrease in load and muscle growth in related areas but added additional load to the affected muscles, precipitating (possibly in conjunction with hill running) compartment syndrome. Conversely, the use of the band on the affected area may have decreased load on the affected area while being reported to increase load on the previously- protected knee area. To date, this has not been documented as a possible treatment for compartment syndrome.

Conclusion and Lessons Learned

It is recommended that this be explored in greater detail as well as being integrated as a possible product warning for patella stabilisers. Next steps might include a review of responses to this innovative treatment by other patients in a controlled clinical context. Considering that this is a very painful and debilitating condition, greater awareness of the potential effects of compression on the affected area may be helpful.