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The effects of kinetic flossing technique in the treatment of lateral elbow tendinopathy: A case study

Pavlos Angelopoulos, Konstantinos Mylonas and **Konstantinos Fousekis**
Technological Educational Institute of Western Greece, Greece

Background & Aim: Lateral elbow tendinopathy (LET) or commonly referred to as tennis elbow, is one of the most common lesions of the arm which is related to overuse sport or work. It is noted that the most commonly affected structure is the origin of the extensor carpi radialis brevis muscle. The signs and the symptoms are clear for LET and can be defined as a syndrome of pain in the lateral epicondyle which can be referred to the whole forearm. There have been recommended many physiotherapy treatment methods such as cross friction manual therapy, mobilization techniques, ultrasound, shock wave and functional exercises. The aim of this case study was to evaluate the effectiveness of kinetic flossing technique combined with specific exercise in the treatment of lateral elbow tendinopathy.

Methods: A 45 year old patient clinically diagnosed with LET presented with a) significant pain on palpation in the lateral aspect of his dominant forearm and b) pain during passive flexion and active extension of the wrist and active supination of the forearm. He also reported pain at the resisted extension of the middle finger. His treatment plan included 8 treatment sessions involving the application of kinetic flossing technique combined with a specially designed exercise programme including eccentric and stretching exercises. Pain and function were evaluated at baseline week 0 and at the 4th and 8th treatment session. Pain and function were evaluated with visual analogue scale (VAS) and a Jamar hand dynamometer respectively.

Results: The patient experienced a significant decrease in pain and an improvement in function of the forearm by both the 4th and the 8th treatment session figure 1 more specifically according to the initial evaluation the pain on VAS was 8 and function (pain free grip strength) was 29 lb. At the end of the 4th treatment session, the VAS was 3, and the pain free grip strength was 65 lb. Finally, after the 8th treatment session, the patient reported his pain decreased to 2 VAS and the function improved to 75 lb.

Conclusions: The results of the present study provides some evidence that the combined application of the kinetic flossing technique and one specific exercise programme can be an effective therapeutic procedure for the rehabilitation of the lateral elbow tendinopathy.

pavlosaggelopoulos@gmail.com