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The Effect of Extracorporeal Shock Wave Therapy in Rotator Cuff Injury: A Narrative Review

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ABSTRACT

Rotator cuff injuries are most common in athletes and individuals who perform repetitive overhead activities. Rotator cuff tears have two main causes: injury and degeneration. Acute tears are usually due to injury the prevalence increased with age. Thirty-six percent of the subjects with current symptoms had rotator cuff tears. Injury can lead to pain, weakness, reducing functional ability. Extracorporel Shock Wave Therapy (ESWT) is the most common therapy used in the treatment of rotator cuff injury. The aim of the review was to assess the effect on pain and functional ability with rotator cuff injuries. A literature search was performed from PubMed, Pedro, Cochrane Library, Google Scholar database from 2000 to 2024. The search utilised terms such as “shock wave therapy”, “electrotherapy modalities” and “rotator cuff injuries” employing Boolean operators (AND, OR). Articles in which treatment includes ESWT was included in this review, non-English articles were excluded. A total of 75 articles extracted from different database, out of which only four met the inclusion criteria. The studies suggest that ESWT is an effective treatment for reducing pain intensity, and enhancing functional ability in patients with rotator cuff injury. The findings suggest that patients with rotator cuff injuries may find that ESWT is a useful treatment for reducing pain intensity and improving functional outcomes. The quality of the included research varied, and several had methodological problems, despite the encouraging data.

Keywords: Functional outcomes, Pain management, Shock wave therapy.