

Effect of Physiotherapy Rehabilitation in Adhesive Capsulitis of the Shoulder: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Adhesive capsulitis is a common musculoskeletal disorder characterised by shoulder pain and progressive restriction of both active and passive range of motion. It is frequently associated with diabetes mellitus and may be triggered or aggravated by minor trauma. Physiotherapy plays a crucial role in reducing pain, improving joint mobility, and restoring functional independence. A 45-year-old male presented with complaints of pain and progressive stiffness of the right shoulder for 1.5 years following a minor traumatic incident in which his shoulder was hit by a car door. Radiological examination at the time of injury revealed no fracture or structural abnormality. The patient had a 10-year history of type 2 diabetes mellitus with irregular glycemetic control. Clinical examination showed marked limitation of both active and passive shoulder Range of Motion (ROM), particularly in abduction and external rotation, associated with pain. Pain intensity measured using the Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) was 7/10.

Based on clinical findings, a diagnosis of post-traumatic adhesive capsulitis of the right shoulder was made. The patient underwent a structured 2-month physiotherapy rehabilitation programme. Initial management focused on pain relief using ultrasonic therapy and Grade I-II Maitland mobilisations. As symptoms improved, treatment progressed to include Grade III-IV mobilisations, Spencer's technique, capsular stretchings, theraband strengthening for rotator cuff and scapular stabilisers, and conventional shoulder exercises to restore functional movement. Following rehabilitation, the patient showed significant improvement in shoulder ROM and functional ability. Pain intensity decreased from 7/10 to 3/10 on the VAS, and the patient regained independence in activities of daily living. This case study demonstrates that a comprehensive physiotherapy rehabilitation programme is effective in managing post-traumatic adhesive capsulitis, even in diabetic patients.

Keywords: Adhesive capsulitis, Shoulder mobilisation, Physiotherapy.

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