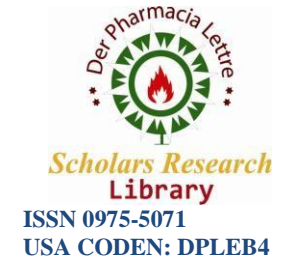


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Understanding the Causes, Symptoms and Treatment Options of Meniscal Lesions

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DESCRIPTION

Meniscal lesions, commonly referred to as meniscal tears, are a prevalent orthopedic injury affecting the menisci, which are C-shaped cartilage structures located in the knee joint. These wedge-shaped structures play a crucial role in providing stability, load distribution, and lubrication within the knee joint. Meniscal tears can occur due to various factors, such as trauma, degeneration, or repetitive stress, and they can significantly impact an individual's mobility and overall knee joint health. The knee joint contains two menisci: the medial meniscus (located on the inner side of the knee) and the lateral meniscus (located on the outer side of the knee). These fibrocartilaginous structures are composed of collagen and water and are wedge-shaped to conform to the joint's curved surfaces. They are firmly attached to the tibia (shinbone) and interact with the femur (thighbone) during knee movement.

Types of meniscal tears

Meniscal tears can be categorized into different types based on their location, shape, and severity:

Radial tear: This type of tear extends from the outer edge of the meniscus towards the center, dividing it into two separate fragments. Radial tears can hinder the meniscus's ability to distribute forces evenly within the knee joint.

Horizontal tear: These tears run parallel to the joint surface and are often associated with degenerative changes. They can cause discomfort and impact knee function.

Flap tear: A flap tear occurs when a portion of the meniscus is torn away from its normal attachment, creating a loose flap that can get caught in the joint during movement, leading to pain and locking of the knee.

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Bucket-handle tear: In this type of tear, a portion of meniscus is displaced into the center of the joint, resembling the handle of a bucket.

Complex tear: Complex tears involve a combination of different tear patterns and are often associated with more extensive damage to the meniscus.

Causes and risk factors

Meniscal tears can result from various factors, including:

Trauma: Sudden twisting or excessive force applied to the knee during sports, accidents, or falls can lead to meniscal tears.

Degeneration: As individuals age, the menisci can become more brittle and prone to tears, even with minimal trauma.

Overuse: Repetitive stress and strain on the knee joint, often seen in athletes or people with physically demanding occupations, can contribute to meniscal tears.

Pre-existing conditions: Certain knee conditions, such as osteoarthritis or ligament injuries, can increase the risk of meniscal tears.

Symptoms

Common symptoms of meniscal tears include knee pain, especially when bending or twisting the knee, swelling and stiffness in the knee joint, a sensation of "catching" or "locking" in the knee during movement, reduced range of motion, instability.

Diagnosis and treatment

Diagnosis typically involves a physical examination, imaging tests (e.g., MRI), and sometimes arthroscopy (a minimally invasive procedure) for a more accurate assessment. Treatment options vary depending on the type, location, and severity of the tear, as well as the patient's age and activity level. Treatment options include rest, ice, and elevation, physical therapy, Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) for pain and inflammation, injections of corticosteroids or hyaluronic acid, surgical repair or partial meniscectomy (removal of the damaged portion).

CONCLUSION

Meniscal lesions or tears are common knee injuries that can significantly impact an individual's quality of life. Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment can help alleviate pain, restore knee function, and prevent long-term complications. It's essential to consult with a healthcare professional for proper evaluation and management if a person suspects a meniscal tear or are experiencing related symptoms.