

ABSTRACT

Sports injury: Office Practice

Introduction to Orthopedic Sports Medicine

Sports medicine as a subspecialty practice mainly concerns with management of soft tissue injuries of the joints such as ligament, meniscus, and cartilage. Presented as either as acute injuries or chronic problems. Management strategy emphasizes on minimally invasive treatment such as use of arthroscopy, and stress on early return to activity. In this presentation, I will focus on common injuries to the knee, shoulder and ankle, as these are the main site of injuries.

Ankle sprain is the commonest injury presented to medical practitioners, mainly anterior talo-fibular(ATFL) ligament tear. Xray may be necessary to rule out fracture. Treatment is mainly conservative. Failure to recover may be due to unrecognized fracture, high ankle sprain or osteochondral injury and may need MRI evaluation.

Knee injuries though less common than ankle, can be challenging. MRI evaluation is very useful. Medial collateral ligament injury is the commonest and recovery is spontaneous. Meniscus tear can heal with conservative management if the tear is small peripheral tear. More complex tear needs surgical intervention. Untreated meniscus tear leads to chronic knee pain and early osteoarthritis. As a rule, intra-articular ligament tear such as Anterior Cruciate ligament (ACL) do not heal and in young patients need reconstructive surgery. Articular cartilage injury can be difficult to diagnose and treat.

Soft tissue injuries of shoulder, though comes under sports surgery in orthopedic, is often not sports related and is more difficult to manage due to the complexity of the functional anatomy of shoulder. Shoulder problems can be categorized under 1. Instability, 2. Rotator cuff pathology, 3. Stiff shoulder (adhesive capsulitis) and 4. Referred pain.

Acute shoulder dislocation typically results from severe injury and needs to be addressed urgently. Despite successful reduction, some shoulders may become chronically unstable and needs surgical stabilization. Rotator cuff tendinopathy is a good example of overuse injury and if not treated, may end up with complete tear requiring surgical repair. Frozen shoulder is a self limiting condition which is poorly understood. Treatment is mainly conservative. Many conditions of cervical and thoracic spine may present as shoulder pain and must be kept in mind.

DR. R. VEJAYAN RAJOO