

A case of frozen hip - a diagnosis we should consider more often?

There are only a few isolated case reports of adhesive capsulitis affecting joints other than the shoulder. We report a case of bilateral frozen hips

A 42-year-old woman with an 18 year history of poorly controlled T1DM presented with a 9 month history of bilateral hip pain & restriction of movement. Her HbA1c had been consistently >119mmol/mol (13%) for more than 6 years prior to presentation. She had already received 3 steroid injections for presumed trochanteric bursitis. Initial imaging of her hips was normal. On examination she was unable to weight bear on the left hip & it was extremely irritable, with severe capsular restriction of movement

Blood tests showed an HbA1c of 143mmol/mol (15.2%), ESR 36mm/hr, CRP 5mg/L, with normal biochemistry & hematology. Extensive rheumatologic investigations were negative. Repeat MRI scan of the left hip, pelvis and spine looking for underlying psoas muscle pathology or referred spinal pain showed insignificant degenerative changes only

Initial joint injection into the left hip with bupivacaine and depomedrone resulted in a transient improvement in pain but not mobility for 3 weeks. Her symptoms recurred within a few weeks

After 18 months she developed a similar pattern of symptoms affecting the right hip. Repeat MRI of the both hips showed non-specific minor edema in the right tensor fascia lata. She was diagnosed with bilateral frozen hips. Due to failure of treatment she was referred to the orthopedic surgeons for manipulation & arthroscopic pressure dilatation under GA

Adhesive capsulitis of the hip is rare & poorly recognised, with a paucity of literature. There is a common association between adhesive capsulitis of the shoulder & diabetes, with a prevalence of 10.3% in T1DM and 22.4% in T2DM. Frozen hip shares similar clinical characteristics & associations with the shoulder & it may respond to similar therapeutic interventions. However, as with the shoulder, treatment can be unrewarding