Restoring Functional Mobility in an Adult Patient Secondary to Subtrochanteric Femur Fracture Surgical Repair: A Case Report

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Background

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration noted 7,277,000 police reported motor vehicle accidents (MVA) in the United States in 2016. As a result, 2,177,000 people were injured.
- In 2008, approximately 340,000 emergency department visits were because of hip fractures.
- Femur fractures average $40,000 in medical bills in the first year following injury and another $5,000 in succeeding years.
- A review of 12 trials resulted in mixed evidence on the necessity of skilled physical therapy (PT) interventions to maximize functional mobility in individuals with femur fractures.

Purpose

The purpose of this case report was to report on the results of skilled PT intervention in treating an individual with a subtrochanteric femur fracture sustained during a MVA.

Case Description

- 47-year-old male with diagnosis of subtrochanteric fracture of the right femur
- 6 weeks s/p intramedullary segmental femur fracture repair
- Highly motivated to return to work, return to prior level of function, regain ability to babysit grandchild, and received immense support from his wife
- Demonstrated severe ROM and strength deficits
- Ambulated with bilateral axillary crutches with toe-touch weight bearing (TTWB) for eight weeks, then ambulated with unilateral axillary crunch
- Participated in skilled physical therapy interventions 3x/week for 6 weeks; the patient was not discharged during this case report

Timeline

The patient was involved in a MVA. The patient underwent an IMN femur fracture fixation. The patient developed a DVT. The patient participated in four weeks of home health PT. Initial Evaluation was completed by the physical therapy student. The patient presented with TTWB status.

Interventions:

- Aerobic Conditioning
  - Treadmill
  - Stationary Bike
- Strengthening
  - Open-chain, closed-chain
  - Core
- Lower extremity stretching
  - Quad
  - Hamstring
  - Calf

MVA = motor vehicle accident, IMN = intramedullary nail, DVT = deep vein thrombosis, PT = physical therapy, TTWB = toe-touch weight bearing, RES = Russian electrical stimulation, SAQ = short arc quad, SLR = straight leg raise, LE = lower extremity, WBBT = weight bearing as tolerated, AC = axillary crutches

Conclusions

- Gait training, therapeutic exercise, manual therapy, and neuro re-education were shown to be beneficial.
- Decreased pain, improved LEFS score, strength improvements, increased independence and functional mobility were observed.
- Delayed WB status slowed therapeutic exercise progressions leading to a prolonged recovery, decreased independence, and increased impact on the family.
- A minimal clinically important difference was not seen in the patient’s LEFS score.
- The patient required continued skilled PT interventions.
- More research is needed to further study the best approach to treating this diagnosis.

Acknowledgements

The author acknowledges Matt Sommers, PT, DPT for the guidance and assistance with the conceptualization of this case report and Sean Conlon, PT, DPT for the supervision and assistance with the treatment and data collection. The author acknowledges the patient for consenting to participate in this case report.

References