



STRIKING PREVALENCE OF CERVICAL SPONDYLITIS IN PATIENTS OF KRISHNA DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Spondylitis is a systemic inflammatory disease that can result in chronic pain and disability. This study aimed to analyse the prevalence and risk of medical discomfort in patients. Cases of spondylitis were encountered during the study period, data may help to clarify certain aspects of this disease and may help the physician to answer a few of the questions frequently asked concerning the condition.

KEYWORDS: Spondylitis, Prevalence.

INTRODUCTION

The human skeletal system includes axial skeleton and appendicular skeleton. The axial skeleton includes skull vertebral column and sternum the appendicular includes girdles and limb bones. The vertebral column is divisible in to cervical, thoracic, lumbar, sacral and caudal regions. Some times the vertebral of some of these regions are effected. Spondylitis is a term referring to degenerative osteoarthritis of the joints between the centra of the spinal vertebrae.^[3] In this condition the facet joints are not involved. If severe, it may cause pressure on nerve roots with subsequent sensory and/ or motor disturbances such as pain, paresthesia or muscle weakness in the limbs. When the space between two adjacent vertebrae narrows, compression of nerve root emerging from the spinal cord may result in radiculopathy (sensory and motor disturbances such as severe pain in the neck, shoulder arm back and /or leg accompanied by muscle weakness, Less commonly, direct pressure on the spinal cord (typically in the cervical spine) may result in myelopathy, characterized by global weakness; gait dysfunction, loss of balance and loss of bowel and bladder control. The patient may experience a phenomenon of shocks (paresthesia) in hands and legs because of nerve compression and lack of blood flow. If vertebrae of the neck are involved, it is labelled as cervical spondylitis.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Cervical spondylitis

Cervical spondylitis is a common degenerative condition of the cervical spine that most likely is caused by age – related changes in the intervertebral disks and vertebrae

of the neck. Research has shown that CSM (cervical spondylitis myelopathy) is the most common cause of non – traumatic weakness in limbs and a persistent and nagging pain in the neck. "Spondylo" is a Greek-word meaning "vertebra". Spondylitis (or spondylosis) means changes in the vertebral joint characterized by increasing degeneration of the intervertebral disc with subsequent changes in the bones and soft tissues.

Most often in people above the age of 40, the intervertebral discs get progressively dehydrated and they become more compressible and less elastic. Mineral starts occurring in the intervertebral disc resulting in secondary changes. Although majority of individuals over 40 years of age demonstrate significant radiological evidence of the above changes, only a small percentage develop symptoms of the same. Another noteworthy point is that some times the degenerative changes in the cervical spine can be visible on the X-ray as early as in 30's but it does not call for any treatment if the patient is not symptomatic.

Causes

Cervical spondylitis is known to be genetically influenced. Research has shown that variations of the HLA-B gene, part of a family of genes called Human Leucocyte Antigen influences the occurrence of spondylitis. It is therefore very possible for a person with a family of cervical spondylitis to have it himself without the influence of any of the other factors. However this possibility exists in only a few cases, as the number of people with spondylitis as a hereditary disorder has been found to be relatively low. Another crucial factor is

doing work that puts pressure on the neck region like lifting heavy loads, gymnastics etc. Other variations of this factor are work environments that require people to work in one position, usually bending for long periods of time. In short, any activity that puts undue stress on the neck for prolonged periods can cause cervical spondylitis. Some examples are watching the TV, seated in an odd position that puts pressure on the neck, traveling for long distances and sleeping whole seated, working on the phones for long hours etc.^[1]

Symptoms

There are quite a few symptoms that indicate cervical spondylitis. These symptoms may show up distinctively or may overlap one another. The following are the commonly seen symptoms of cervical spondylitis. Pain in the neck and shoulder regions, the pain in the neck region is usually followed by stiffening, which gradually increases. The pain in the neck area can also move downwards to the shoulders and the arms. Some patients may also experience swelling. Pain in the lower areas at the back of the head called the sub occipital region. This pain can move downwards to the base of the neck as well as the top of the head. Radicular symptoms: Patients may sometimes display loss of reflexes in certain areas due to the compression of the spinal nerves. Other radicular symptoms include numbness and pain in specific areas, usually the arms and the shoulders.^[2] Cervical spondylotic myelopathy: Patients with CSM may experience difficulty in writing, unusual sensations as well as weakness. In cases one may find loss of control over the sphincter as well as incontinence while passing urine. Some patients may also experience urgency in passing urine. A patient suffering from cervical spondylitis suffers from compression of the spinal cord which in turn leads to a compression of the spinal nerves. This may manifest itself in the form of an unstable gait.

Diagnosis:-X rays, CT scan, MRI.

Treatment: There is no total cure for cervical spondylitis in conventional medicine.

Treatment is usually conservative in nature. There are however different drugs and devices that can help control it.

Cervical collar: When in the initial stage a good way to protect the cervical spine from further damage and degeneration is to wear a cervical collar. Cervical collar helps to keep the neck straight, provides support to the muscles in the region.

There are two kinds of collars, "Soft collar" and "Hard collar". As the name suggests the soft collar is made of soft elastic fabric that forms a collar around the neck. It is held together by a Velcro strap and has air holes for comfort. If in the initial stages, a patient can wear a soft collar. In case the cervical spondylitis is more pronounced, the patient must wear a hard collar. This is same in structure and shape as the soft collar. The only

difference being the presence of a harder core lining along the length of the collar.

Traction therapy: A patient can also opt for traction therapy of the neck, if the pain is more severe.

Medication: Besides these devices and treatment options, there are medications available as well. Commonly prescribed medications are usually NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) or muscular relaxants. A common NSAID is ibuprofen while cyclobenzaprine is a common muscle relaxant. However it is not advisable to just take the medication without any other alternative therapeutic measures as the medicine can cause other side effects in the long run and there is also the possibility of the body's immune system getting used to the medication.

Surgical intervention: If the cervical condition is detected that has already been done to the nerves. It can only prevent further damage therefore surgery is always kept as the final option in cases where the cervical spondylitis has been detected at a very late stage. Along with using devices like the cervical collar, it is advisable for the patient to prefer, specific exercises directed at the neck muscles. Another option that usually produces positive results is physiotherapy. Usually, the treatment of cervical spondylitis consists of a combination of the three options-usage of a collar physiotherapy and medication.

Alternative medicine: Nowadays the west is increasingly turning to ancient alternative healing systems, such as ayurveda and yoga in their search for cures. All these fields have a high degree of success and virtually no side effects.^[4] Ayurvedic remedies usually are derived from herbs. While yoga is nothing but a set of highly effective physiotherapeutic exercises that have a holistic impact on the body. While these may not cure cervical spondylitis, they help in minimizing the damage to the cervical spine and the neck and making it stronger so that pain is drastically reduced.

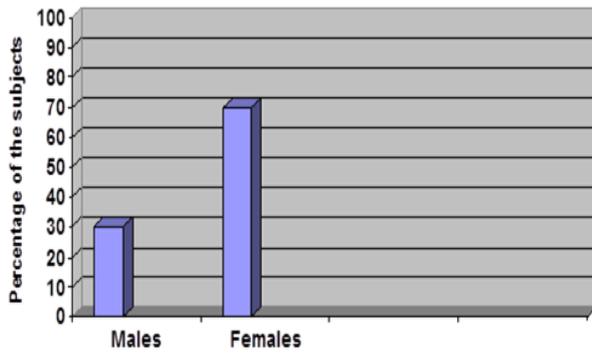
METHODOLOGY

The data was collected from the persons who are suffering from spondylitis by survey method from patients of Velupucherla and Nuzivedu of Krishna District.

RESULTS

Table 1: Percentage of the subjects by sex.

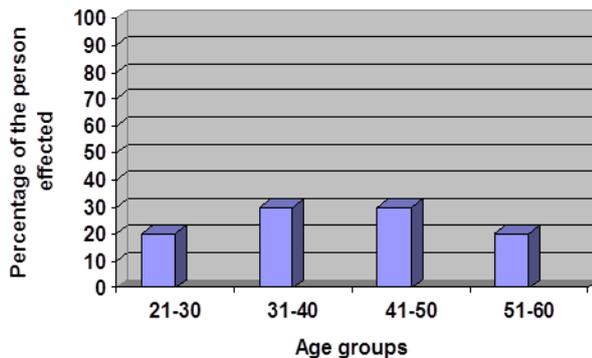
S.No	Sex	Percentage of the subjects
1	Males	30
2	Females	70



Graph-1.

Table – 2: Percentage of different age groups effected.

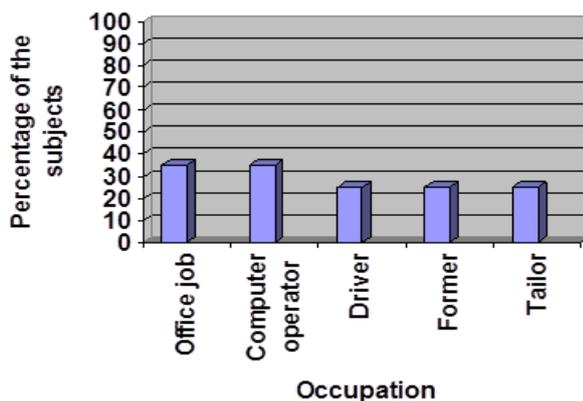
S.No	Age group	Percentage of the person effected
1	21-30	20
2	31-40	30
3	41-50	30
4	51-60	20



Graph – 2.

Table 3: Occupation of the subjects.

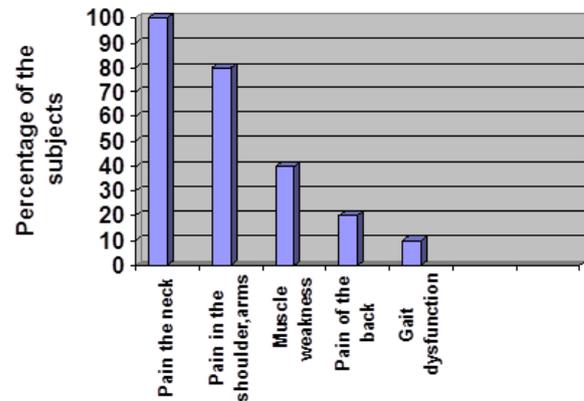
S.No	Occupation	Percentage of the subjects
1	Office job	35
2	Computer operator	35
3	Driver	25
4	Former	25
5	Tailor	25



Graph-3.

Table-4: Symptoms.

S.No	Symptoms	Percentage of the subjects
1	Pain the neck	100
2	Pain in the shoulder, arms	80
3	Muscle weakness	40
4	Pain of the back	20
5	Gait dysfunction	10



Graph – 4.

DISCUSSION

Table. 1 shows that in the study 30% are Females and 70% are Males.

Table.2 shows that, 21-30 age groups are 20%,31-40 age groups are 30%,41-50 age groups are 30%,51-60 age groups are 20%.

In table.3 it is observed that, 35% of the subjects are working in offices, 35% of the subjects are computer operators, 25% of the subjects are drivers,25% of the subjects are formers, 25% of the subjects are tailors. So this spondylitis is related to occupation of the persons. Studies also have proved this.

Table. 4 shows 100% of the subjects are suffering from pain in the neck, 80% of the subjects are suffering from pain in the shoulder, arms, 40% of the subjects are suffering from muscle weakness, 20% of the subjects are suffering from pain at the back, 10% of the subjects are suffering from gait dysfunction.

CONCLUSION

Persons suffering from cervical spondylitis, should avoid doing heavy work, should take regular treatment, should do exercises, should go to a doctor regularly, should try to avoid pain, should try to lead a comfortable life. There is no permanent cure for this disease. But people suffering from spondylitis should avoid doing heavy work.^[5] They should take treatment regularly and should go for regular medical check up. If certain appropriate precautions are taken, the risk of this disease can be minimized.

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