

CASE REPORT

EVALUATION AND TREATMENT OF MUSCULOSKELETAL CHEST WALL PAIN IN A MILITARY ATHLETE

Richard B. Westrick, PT, DPT, DSc, OCS, SCS¹

Edo Zylstra, PT, MS, OCS²

Tamer Issa, PT, DPT, OCS³

Joseph M. Miller, PT, DPT, DSc, OCS, SCS⁴

J. Parry Gerber, PT, PhD, SCS, ATC⁵

ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: Athletes reporting chest pain are challenging to diagnose and equally challenging to treat. The majority of chest pain is musculoskeletal in origin, yet differentiating these from other more serious conditions should be the initial primary focus. The ability to reproduce the patient's symptoms aids in the differential diagnostic process. The purpose of this case report is to illustrate the use of dry needling (DN) to aid in the diagnosis and treatment of focal chest wall pain.

Case Descriptions: A 22 year-old male military athlete with anterior chest pain, refractory to traditional physical therapy, was evaluated and treated with dry needling.

Outcomes: Favorable results were achieved as demonstrated by clinically meaningful improvements in the Patient Specific Functional Scale, the Global Rating of Change score, and his physical performance which allowed this athlete to return to competition and military training.

Conclusion: Dry needling in the hands of properly trained providers may aid in diagnosis and treatment of focal chest wall syndromes.

Key Words: chest pain, costochondritis, dry needling, military athlete, physical therapy

Level of Evidence: Therapy, Level 4

¹ United States Military Academy – West Point, NY; Orthopedic Manual Physical Therapy Fellowship, Regis University, Denver, CO, USA

² KinetaCare Physical Therapy, Brighton, CO, USA

³ Issa Physical Therapy, Rockvill, MD, USA

⁴ Evans Army Community Hospital, Fort Carson, CO, USA

⁵ Director, US Military-Baylor University Sports Physical Therapy Doctoral Residency, United States Military Academy – West Point, NY, USA

The opinions or assertions contained herein are the private views of the authors and are not to be construed as official or as reflecting the views of The United States Military Academy, the US Army, or the Department of Defense.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Dr. Richard B. Westrick

United States Military Academy

900 Washington Road, ATTN: Physical Therapy

West Point, NY 10996

Phone: (845) 938-3067

Fax: (845) 938-8114

Email: richard.westrick@us.army.mil