

The Clinical Outcomes of Arthroscopic Intra-articular Repair for an Isolated Partial Articular-Surface Tear of the Subscapularis Tendon

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Purpose

A partial-thickness tear of subscapularis tendon (SSC) in the articular surface is common. This study explores our clinical diagnosis and outcomes of the tear.

Methods

Seven shoulders in 7 patients with an isolated partial articular-surface tear of SSC without another rotator cuff lesion were treated with arthroscopic intra-articular repair using suture anchors. A standard shoulder evaluation was performed, which included range of motion, impingement signs (Neer, Hawkins, Ellman), tenderness and tests for subscapularis function, such as lift-off and belly-press. Outcomes were evaluated at a mean of 11 months using UCLA Score.

Results

All patients demonstrated positive tenderness on the lesser tuberosity and positive Hawkins and Ellman impingement sign. The belly-press test was positive in 2 patients. The lift-off and bear-hug test were positive in 1 patients. MRI evaluation was difficult for diagnosis of the articular side tear of SSC and MR-arthrography (MRA) showed the tear. The average UCLA score improved significantly to 32.8.

Conclusion

Arthroscopic intra-articular repair for an isolated partial articular-surface tear of the subscapularis tendon is an effective procedure. A careful clinical examination may enable the diagnosis of a partial-thickness tear of SSC. MRA may provide additional information.