The Painful Elbow, Wrist, and Hand

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The Painful Elbow

- A 44 yo M presents to clinic complaining of a sore elbow

- What further questions do you have for this patient?
- What is on your differential diagnosis?
Elbow Anatomy
The Painful Elbow
Olecranon Bursitis

• Hx
  • Swelling, possibly pain with fluid pocket over olecranon

• PE

• Tx
  • Rest/trauma avoidance, compression, consider aspiration

• Etiology
  • Trauma, gout, RA, infection
Olecranon Bursitis

- Consider aspiration of the bursal fluid when there is an effusion with local erythema or tenderness
The Painful Elbow
Tendonitis

- **Hx**
  - **Medial** (common flexor tendon)
    - Often aggravated by repetitive gripping
  - **Lateral** (common extensor tendon)
    - Often aggravated by repetitive wrist movements

- **PE**
  - Medial or lateral point tenderness over tendon insertion sites
Tendonitis

- Tx
  - Rest, ice, NSAIDs, compression strap, injection, PT
The Painful Elbow

- Systemic diseases
  - Gout
  - RA
- Exam findings
The Painful Wrist

• Remember your anatomy to help develop your differential diagnosis….
DeQuervain’s tenosynovitis

- **Hx**
  - Pain near base of thumb
  - Exacerbated by moving thumb away from the hand (i.e., radial abduction)

- **PE**
  - Finkelstein’s test: pain over radial styloid differentiates DeQuervain’s from CMC DJD

- **Tx**
  - Rest, ice, NSAIDs, splint, injection, OT
DeQuervain’s tenosynovitis

• Affects both the abductor pollicis longus (APL) and the extensor pollicis brevis (EPB) at the point

• Similar to trigger finger in that DeQuervain’s involves a noninflammatory thickening of both the tendons and the tendon sheath through which they pass
DeQuervain’s tenosynovitis

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CMC OA

• Hx
  • Pain near base of thumb

• PE

• Tx
  • Rest, ice, NSAIDs, splint, injection, OT

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Scaphoid Fracture

- **Hx**
  - Following trauma such as fall on outstretched hand
  - Pain near base of thumb

- **PE**
  - TTP at volar pole, anatomic snuffbox, and/or distal to Lister’s Tubercle

- **Tx**
  - Rest, ice, NSAIDs, splint, injection, OT
Scaphoid Fracture

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Scaphoid Fracture

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Scaphoid Fracture

• “Scaphoid fractures are often occult and a high index of suspicion should be maintained for any patient with wrist pain following trauma. Any tenderness in the snuffbox should be treated as a scaphoid fracture until proven otherwise”
Scaphoid Fracture

• For suspected scaphoid fractures include posteroanterior (PA), true lateral, oblique and scaphoid views of the wrist

• Within two to six weeks of the injury, plain radiographs are limited in their capacity to detect scaphoid fractures... The false negative rate is approximately 20 percent

• Consider bone scan, MRI, or CT
Scaphoid Fracture
Ganglion Cyst

- **Hx**
  - Round mass, most frequently on dorsum of hand, can be painful

- **PE**
  - Fluid filled lesion overlying tendon
  - Transilluminate

- **Tx**
  - Watchful waiting, aspiration (>50% recur in 1 year), resection

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The Painful Hand

- Remember your anatomy to help develop your differential diagnosis....
Wrist Anatomy

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CTS

• Risk factors include
  • Obesity
  • Female gender
  • Disorders such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, hypothyroidism, connective tissue diseases, preexisting median mononeuropathy
  • Pregnancy
  • Genetic predisposition
  • Aromatase inhibitor use
CTS

• Hx
  • Pain, paresthesia in median nerve distribution often worse at night and with certain activities
  • May radiate to elbow

• PE
  • Tinel’s, Phalen’s (50-70% sensitive), Thenar wasting/atrophy, (consider EMG)

• Tx
  • Splint, OT, injection, surgical decompression
Trigger finger

- **Hx**
  - Pain, loss of smooth motion with gripping due to inflammation of flexor tendons from repetitive gripping or pressure on palms which results in catching or locking

- **PE**
  - Flexor tendon obstruction near MCP head

- **Tx**
  - Rest including buddy taping, injection
Trigger finger
OA

• Hx
  • Morning stiffness <1 hour

• PE
  • PIP & DIP involvement
  • Heberden’s nodes
  • Bouchard’s nodes
  • Ulnar deviation
OA

Heberden's Nodes

Bouchard's Nodes

Osteoarthritis (Late Stage)
RA

- Hx
  - Morning stiffness >1 hour

- PE
  - MCP & PIP involvement
  - Synovitis
  - Boutonniere deformity
  - Swan neck deformity
  - Nodules
  - Muscle atrophy
  - Ulnar deviation
RA

- Ulnar deviation
- Swollen, thickened
- Rheumatoid nodule
- Muscular atrophy
- Boutonnière deformity
- Swan neck deformity
The Painful Hand

- Infections
- Tumors
- Trauma
- Etc
References

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