
Design: Randomized clinical trial

Brief summary of findings:
- 61 patients with lateral epicondylitis (15 men, 46 women, mean age 47) were treated in a university physical therapy and rehab department in Turkey
- No inclusion or exclusion criteria were reported
- All patients had standard PT with rest, activity modification, stretching & strengthening exercises
- All received naproxen, either by phonophoresis (n=29) or by iontophoresis (n=32)
- Phonophoresis was delivered by ultrasound (1 mHz, 1 W/cm²); iontophoresis was delivered by galvanic current (0.08-0.004 mA/cm²)
- Average number of phonophoresis sessions was 19.2; average number of iontophoresis sessions was 20.9; average duration of follow-up was 4.5 months
- Pain VAS on a 10 point scale decreased in both groups during treatment; no difference in treatment effect was reported between the 2 groups (rest pain decreased from about 3 to about 1 in both groups; activity pain from about 6 to about 2.5 for both groups)
- Grip strength improved in both groups from about 20 kg to about 24 kg
- Both groups improved equally on the Nirschl-Petterone scale (measures levels of pain with levels of daily activity)

Authors’ conclusions:
- Lateral epicondylitis pain is equally relieved by phonophoresis and iontophoresis of naproxen

Comments:
- No information is given about which patients qualified for the study
- It is not clear whether the outcomes were measured for all patients at the end of their treatment, or at some follow-up point after the completion of treatment; therefore, it is not clear whether immediate effects or longer-term treatment effects are being reported
- Because phonophoresis and iontophoresis are being compared, it is not clear whether two experimental interventions are being compared or whether there is a “control” intervention against which an experimental interventions is being tested.

Assessment: Inadequate for conclusions about either phonophoresis or iontophoresis (description of patient population is lacking and follow-up is not clear; it is not clear which group is to be regarded as the control intervention)