

Review

Weather associated symptoms after ankle injuries; myth or reality?

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Abstract

Weather associated symptoms are commonly described by patients seeking compensation following ankle injury.

Multiple search strategies were used to search the literature for any scientific evidence of this phenomena.

There is currently little information in the literature referring to the occurrence of weather related symptoms following ankle injuries. Reports referring to the phenomena provide low quality evidence and discuss only post operative patients.

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1. Introduction

Anecdotally the authors have noted that, following ankle injuries, claimants in a medical legal setting commonly report cold intolerance and weather associated symptoms. This paper examines the literature to find if there is any evidence base for such complaints.

2. Methods

2.1. Search strategy

We used multiple search strategies as indicated in [Table 1](#) and searched multiple data bases, detailed in [Table 2](#).

The search strategies were designed for maximum specificity and sensitivity as described by Haynes et al. [1]. Articles identified as containing the search terms in the abstract, heading or subheading were hand searched. We also expanded the search to include the full-text, easily accessible articles available through relevant on-line journals shown in [Table 3](#).

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Table 1
Search strategies

Search terms	No. of articles yielded	Data base	Hand searched
Two text-word terms strategy: (“weather” or “cold” or “humidity” or “barometric” or “sun” or “rain”) and the truncated term “ankle.tw”	510	All data base in Table 2	Abstract
Text-word ankle	2416	Full-text on line orthopaedic journals Table 3	Full-text
Clinical trial .pt or random .mp. or therapeutic use.fs. combined with ankle, and (cold or weather or rain or sun or barometric) as text-words ^a	130	MEDLINE—1951–2005	Abstract
“Cold intolerance” and ankle, “ankle injury” or “ankle injuries” and weather	141	Internet: Google-Scholar	Full-text

^a The maximize sensitivity (98.9%) optimal search strategy for retrieving scientifically strong studies of treatment from MEDLINE.

Table 2
Data bases used in the search

Data base	Ankle and injury as word map	Ankle-injuries as subject
Cochrane Controlled Trials Register	60	7
Allied and Complementary Medicine 1985–2005	1076	462
British Nursing Index, 1994–2005	44	23
CINAHL (R), 1982 to date	3152	976
EMBASE, 1974–2005	6126	1753
MEDLINE, 1951–2005	8157	9324
PsycINFO, 1887–2005	9	11

2.2. Article inclusion

Any article designed to correlate or describe an association between symptoms after ankle injuries and meteorological variance.

2.3. Article exclusion

Non ankle injuries.

3. Results

There are more than 10,000 articles discussing different aspects of ankle injury in the literature. Five hundred and ten

Table 3
Full-text online journals searched

Journal	Issue	Ankle.tw
JBJS (British Volume)	1984–2005	685
JBJS (American Volume)	1996–2005	61
Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavia	February 2000–December 2004	19
The Foot	June 1993–2005	586
Injury	January 1994–2005	382
Journal of Orthopaedic Research	January 1997–2005	118
Orthopedics	April 1998–2005	17
Journal of Emergency Medicine	January 1973–2005	180
European Journal of Pain	January 1995–2005	40
Current Orthopaedics	January 1995–2005	128
Journal of Athletic Training	July–September 1997–2005	75
The Physician and Sports Medicine	March 1996–2005	82
British Journal of Sports Medicine	April 2001–December 2003	36
Legal Medicine	2000–2005	2
Military Medicine	September 1998–2005	5

articles included the search terms shown in Table 1 in the heading, sub-heading or abstract.

There were no articles investigating weather associated orthopaedic symptoms as a primary variant in patients with ankle injuries.

We identified only eight articles that mentioned weather related symptoms after ankle injury, these articles provide low

Table 4
Articles investigating the incidence of weather associated symptoms in case-series studies after ankle injuries

Author	Diagnosis	Treatment	No. of patients	Follow up (years)	Percentage of patient affected by weather (%)
Rudert et al. [20]	Ankle instability	Reconstruction of the ligaments with local periosteal tissue	90 ^a	2.8	10
Labs et al. [21]	Ankle instability	Modified Evans tenodesis	79 ^a	3.01	20.2
Desbiolles and Stauffer [22]	Ruptured ligaments	Surgical repair	46 ^a	1–5	19.6

^a Retrospective case series studies.

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