

Orthopedic Surgeons Puzzle Over Chondrolysis Explosion

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The number of young patients with chondrolysis and lawsuits related to the condition has significantly increased over the past several years, according to an Advanced Health Solutions news release.

Among young patients who undergo minor orthopedic procedures, the number of patients that develop chondrolysis has become staggering. There have been several hundred lawsuits filed nationwide alleging intra-articular pain pumps used after arthroscopic procedures caused the chondrolysis.

Without clear evidence and large-scale data about the cause of chondrolysis and potential link to pain pumps, the cases have been difficult for medical professionals. However, a new systematic review set to appear in the November issue of the *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery* involving 830 chondrolysis cases has concluded:

- The cause of chondrolysis is multifactorial and remains unknown, however possible risk factors include thermal injury from the procedure, suture use, radiofrequency devices, a history of trauma and biomechanical stresses of surgery
- Reports of chondrolysis are increasing in almost all diarthroidial joints of the body across the globe
- It is often misdiagnosed and patients with osteoarthritis or other joint problems are mislabeled with chondrolysis, so they don't receive proper treatment
- There is no clear-cut causal relationship between pain pumps and chondrolysis

Several surgeons from around the country participated in the study, including Brian J. Cole, MD, head of the Cartilage Restoration Center at Rush University Medical Center, and Daniel J. Solomon, MD, from Marin Orthopedics and Sports Medicine in Novato, Calif.

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