

ABSTRACT

TITLE: The use of Manual Therapy and Medical Exercise Therapy to Mobilize Scar and Reduce Pain in a Patient with a 17-Year History of Low Back Pain.

STUDY DESIGN: Single Subject Case Report

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE: A patient with longstanding low back pain can be a challenge to manage. Low back pain may originate from visceral, neural, articular, discogenic, or myofascial sources. Myofascial restriction relating to scar tissue formation can lower tissue irritability threshold and create the potential for abnormal movement patterns. This may lead to postural problems, back pain and dysfunctions with gait. Both manual therapy and medical exercise therapy (MET) have been used as intervention methods in the treatment of chronic low back pain. This report presents a case with chronic low back pain that was managed by addressing an old scar utilizing manual therapy and medical exercise therapy strategies.

CASE DESCRIPTION: A 52-year-old male with a 17-year history of chronic low back-and-buttock pain was evaluated and treated with physical therapy. An old abdominal scar causing fibrous adhesions and altered mechanical loading of the lower quadrant was speculated as being a source of the patient's symptoms.

OUTCOMES: Physical therapy intervention was provided over an 8-week period with a favorable response to treatment. A significant improvement of the patient's pain and symptoms related to gait were reported.

DISCUSSION: This report serves as a reminder to consider the role of scar tissue in patients with longstanding symptoms. A multimodal treatment approach incorporating manual therapy and medical exercise therapy with specific dosing strategies should be considered when managing a patient with chronic low back pain.