

Arthroscopy and sport

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In the last 30 years, arthroscopy became a well-defined and standardized technique in orthopaedics, providing excellent results in the management of different pathologies especially involving the shoulder and knee joints. Following the encouraging results reached by arthroscopy in these fields, its use was extended to treat other joints such as the ankle, wrist, elbow and hip.

Nowadays, the evolution of arthroscopy is amazing: new surgical instruments; new surgical techniques; new diagnostic knowledge through arthroscopy. In particular, the diagnostic information obtained through arthroscopy played an important role in the diagnosis and treatment of different pathologies, and have supported or in some cases exceeded the diagnostic strategies, which are the base of all medical treatments.

Clinical assessment remains crucial for the diagnosis of joints pathologies, and numerous more specific and reliable clinical tests were developed in the last years. In addition, an important progress was done by magnetic resonance imaging, which reached high levels of reliability, helping the specialist to define proper diagnosis.

The continuous information on arthroscopic anatomy allowed the surgeons to correct or modify the surgical techniques, and the most significant example is the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) reconstruction technique. The knowledge of anatomy, biology, biomechanics, surgical techniques and rehabilitation programs have been extended and ameliorated thanks to arthroscopy. It is really important also to take into account that the average age and average life expectancy of the population is still increasing. Then, a crucial aspect is the education in the arthroscopic field. Using the arthroscope, which is substantially a camera, the

learning is facilitated respect to traditional open surgery, because it is possible to watch the anatomy and the surgical techniques on a screen. However, the learning curve of arthroscopy is significantly slow respect to open surgery and needs more and continuous insights. Conferences are the ideal setting to discuss about various scientific topics, while cadaver labs are fundamental for the young arthroscopists to ameliorate their surgical skills. The Italian Society of Arthroscopy (SIA) is actively involved in the organization of different cadaver lab sessions every year, following the example of other well-known international societies of arthroscopy. But the real challenge is to educate the new generations of orthopedic surgeons to publish continuously their intuitions, ideas and scientific researches.

In the last years, sports traumatology received a great help by arthroscopy, especially in the management of sports patients. These particular patients often desire to return to practice sports after surgery, and sports activity represents an important aspect of patients life, even of the older patients. Then, a large number of researchers worldwide have focused their attention on sports-specific injuries and their best management. Several information have been acquired: sports knowledge; sports specific motions; knowledge of training methodologies; diagnostic, therapeutic and rehabilitative options related with sports individuals.

Recent studies have focused their attention on the epidemiology of sport trauma and prevention of injuries related with sports, such as diagnostic options, evaluations, treatment and rehabilitation of sports individuals.

The synergy of sports and arthroscopy is becoming essential to reach new more accurate diagnostic procedures, surgical techniques and standardized rehabilitation protocols, in order to guarantee a short recovery time after surgery.

I really hope that this issue, which is the expression of the collaboration between this important Journal and the SIA, can be a starting point and a stimulus for all the orthopedic surgeons to ameliorate the scientific knowledge in the field of sports traumatology and arthroscopy.

Piero Volpi, SIA President