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Summary

Background: Despite the rapid advancement of imaging and arthroscopic techniques about the hip joint, missed diagnoses are still common. As a deep joint and compared to the shoulder and knee joints, localization of hip symptoms is difficult. Hip pathology is not easily isolated and is often related to intra and extra-articular abnormalities. In light of these diagnostic challenges, we recommend an algorithmic approach to effectively diagnoses and treat hip pain.

Methods: In this review, hip pain is evaluated from diagnosis to treatment in a clear decision model. First we discuss emergency hip situations followed by the differentiation of intra and extra-articular causes of the hip pain. We differentiate the intra-articular hip as arthritic and non-arthritic and extra-articular pain as surrounding or remote tissue generated. Further, extra-articular hip pain is evaluated according to pain location. Finally we summarize the surgical treatment approach with an algorithmic diagram.

Conclusion: Diagnosis of hip pathology is difficult because the etiologies of pain may be various. An algorithmic approach to hip restoration from diagnosis to rehabilitation is crucial to successfully identify and address prearthritic hip problems.

Diagnostic algorithm

To ensure the best outcome of hip restoration the approach comprises four components: history, physical examination, radiology/laboratory and understanding patient expectations. Every type of pathology can be evaluated by this method called “HERE” (History, Examination, Radiology- laboratory, Expectation of patients). The first step of the diagnostic algorithm is to figure out the urgency of the pathology.

Emergency hip pain

The most important step of hip pain evaluation is the differentiation of emergency hip conditions from non-emergency conditions.

Subluxation associated hip effusion: Space occupying pathologic conditions in hip joint can force the head out from acetabulum and should be addressed urgently in order to prevent dislocation and possible avascular necrosis. It is more common in children but major effusion of the hip is not uncommon in adults.

Tips (HERE) History: Very painful, with or without a trauma history. Pain in the groin or medial thigh Examination: Decreased and painful of range of motion. Pain aggravated by lying on the side, Flexed, internal rotated position of the hip. Radiology: Increased joint space, with US effusion and MRI space occupying lesion. Expectation: Immediately reducing the pain of the hip without sequelae.

Stress Fractures: Femoral neck stress fractures are less common but require early diagnosis to prevent displacement and avascular necrosis of the femoral head. They present in two age groups: one is young, dead

Introduction

Over the past 25 years, much ground has been covered in the field of native hip preservation. In the last decade, there have been significant efforts directed toward preserving the hip joint. Some of the reasons behind the interest in hip preservation are the early onset of hip problems associated with the institutionalization of sport at the early ages of life and increasing activities of young people which encourage supraphysiologic range of motion. There has been improved recognition of the problem by medical professionals with high technology imaging techniques and a better educated patient population. Further, increased life expectancy encourages us to preserve and restore the native hip as long as possible. While there is one outcome for the end-stage arthritic hip, there are many etiologies of hip degeneration or hip pain. Consequently, an algorithmic approach to hip restoration from diagnosis to rehabilitation is crucial to successfully identify and address prearthritic hip problems.
active healthy individuals who has a history of overloading by sports or military activities. The other group is the elderly females who suffer from osteopenia or osteoporosis.**


**Hip Joint Infection:** Septic arthritis is an important and serious condition of the growing hip because of its high potential to cause permanent sequelae. The most common joint infection in infants and in the young is the hip joint. In children differentiation of septic arthritis from transient synovitis is important as transient synovitis resolves spontaneously while the septic arthritis needs operative treatment. Although septic arthritis of the hip is primarily recognized in children, it can be seen in adolescents and adults. Delayed or inadequate treatment of septic arthritis in adults can lead to irreversible joint destruction, dissemination of the infection, and death with a rate of 11%. Gonococcal arthritis is the most common form of septic arthritis in United States. It is rarely associated with joint destruction which is common in Staphylococcus aureus septic arthritis.


**Dislocation and Fracture:** Diagnosis is not a real challenge though presentation and history of trauma.

**Tips (HERE)** History: Trauma Examination: Painful motion, deformity. Radiology/Laboratory: In some cases, the fracture line cannot be differentiated with standard X-ray plain films Standard pelvis and inlet, outlet views and Judet views of acetabulum are required. CT is helpful in most cases to identify fracture patterns and loose bodies. Expectation: Reduction with or without fixation.

**Non emergency hip pain**

After elimination of emergency causes of hip pain, we determine if the pain generator is intraarticular or extraarticular with the help of history and physical examination. Though the hip is a deep and complex structured joint there are many structures around the hip that can cause hip pain and disability. On the other hand, there are many other extra articular remote pathologies that may causes hip pain, radiate, or affect the hip joint (Figure 1). Hip pathologies may mimic other organ pathologies or hip pain can radiate.

I. **Differentiation of intraarticular pathologies from extraarticular:** The most important clinical tools are history and physical examination. If there is hip pain with Byrd’s “C-sign”, loss of range of motion: asymmetry in hip motions, positive provocative tests, func-
Table I. Findings Support Intra-articular Pathology.

- Pain 'C sign'
- Asymmetrical ROM
- Positive provocative tests
- Functional hemipelvic muscle weakness

Intraarticular hemipelvic muscle weakness, then we suspect intraarticular pathologies (Table I). These clinical findings are confirmed with radiographic findings. If there are soft radiographic findings with pelvis, lumbar, radiculopathic pain, hip range of motion is symmetric, negative provocative tests and selective muscle weakness/dysfunction, then we should suspect extraarticular pathologies (Figure 2).

II. Differentiation of Arthritic and Non-Arthritic Hip Pain:

The physical examination is similar but ROM might be much more affected in the arthritic hip than non-arthritic. Differentiation can be done by radiologic findings⁶. Non or mild arthritic hip pain can be addressed by arthroscopic treatment; however, the severity of hip arthritis may negatively affect the outcome of hip arthroscopy¹⁰. The severity of the arthritis in the hip can be classified with the Tönnis Radiologic Classification as “Mild moderate and severe”¹¹. The degree of osteoarthritis of the hip joint is assessed by the Authors using the Tönnis radiological classification and some additional signs of degeneration (Figure 3) including a central acetabular cotyloid osteophyte (the saber tooth sign) best visualized on the AP view, remodeling of the superolateral acetabulum (the seagull sign), sclerosis of the inferior acetabulum (the hammock sign), remodeling of the inferior femoral neck, and osteophytic changes of the femoral head fovea and posterosuperior femoral head-neck junction. Joint space loss under 2 mm is a threshold for hip arthroscopy contraindication (Figure 4)¹². Most of the cartilage loss can be seen at weight bearing area but non weight bearing but under stress areas of the hip cartilage should be assessed with joint space ratio test in the Faux-profile view also¹² (Figure 4 b).

Non Arthritic or Mild Arthritic Hip Pain

With the suspicion of intra-articular pathology and after elimination of arthritis in hip joint, non or mild arthritic hip pain can be addressed. This type of pain can be classified by structural and most of them can be treated by defined arthroscopic or open procedures. Most of them have similar findings preoperatively (Figure 5).

Figure 2. Hip Pain According to Intra- or Extra-articular Causes.

The 5 radiographic signs of arthritis in the hip
1. Posterosuperior femoral headneck junction remodeling sign.
2. Seagull sign.
3. Saber tooth sign.
4. Hammock sign.
5. Inferior femoral neck remodeling sign.

Figure 3. Specific Radiographic Signs of Arthritis in the Hip.
Bony Structural Pathologies: Pathologies typically are classified according to structures but almost all cases have a mix of pathologies. A bony impingement or dysplasia may cause surface cartilage and labral cartilage damage and synovial inflammation. On the other hand, chondral damage is associated with subchondral bony changes. Synovial and inflammatory diseases may cause chondral lesions. So classifying the pathologies is important for comprehension of the pathologies and elimination at differential diagnosis but surgeon should know that especially in the hip joint he will face a multi-structural pathology.

Femoroacetabular Impingement (FAI): In assessing the pathology, classification as Cam or Pincer is important but a majority of cases should be considered as “mixed impingement” cases. Patients should be treated according to findings of preoperative evaluation as well as intraoperatively and fluoroscopically assessed findings. Senior Author uses a treatment algorithm for FAI at hip arthroscopy which is shown in the Figure 8.


Dysplasia

Tips (HERE) History: Symptoms arise from the anterior labral tear and cartilage damage which is similar to those of femoroacetabular impingement (FAI). Additional Symptoms may be instability, weakness, trochanteric symptoms due to abductor dysfunction and fatigue. Examination: Clinical examination may be normal, but symptoms can created by impinge-
ment test similar to FAI. Trendelenburg sign and coxa-
algic gait are additional examinational findings. Radi-
ology and Laboratory: Radiology is the most common
assessment tool. The lateral center edge (LCE) angle
is considered dysplastic below 20°; the Tönnis (sour-
cil) angle is abnormal above 10°. MRI of cartilage
deg (dGEMRIC) or hip arthroscopy can be a diagnostic
tool to identifying candidates for pelvic reorientation.
Expectation: Long and painless serving of the native
hip. Injections, Arthroscopic treatment of intraarticular
pathologies and bony reconstructions with periac-
etabular osteotomy (PAO) and Femoral Osteotomies
or joint reconstruction can be done according to stage
of the disease.13

Avascular Necrosis (AVN)

Tips (HERE) History: Corticosteroid use, autoimmune
disorders, alcohol abuse, smoking, and coagulation
disorders, Previous hip surgery or trauma to hip
should be assessed as risk factors. In the early
stages it is asymptomatic. After it becomes symptom-
atic deep groin pain is the most common symptom.
Expectation: Preventing arthritis by reconstruc-
tion or regeneration of the articular cartilage by the
techniques of chondroplasty, abrasion arthroplasty,
osteochondral drilling, osteoarticular autograft or allo-
graft, hemicap resurfacing, autologous chondrocyte
implantation (ACI), or microfracture.15

Capsular/Ligamentous Pathologies

Ligamentum Teres (LT) Tears: The role of the liga-
mentum teres is more important when the other stabil-
izers of the hip have some deficiency.20

Tips (HERE) History: Completely non-specific and
same with intra-articular symptoms. But painful click-
ing, locking or giving way can be assessed. Examina-
tion: Log-roll test, resisted straight-leg raise and liga-
mentum teres tests can be assessed.21 Radiology:
MR and CT arthrogram are helpful rather than MRI or
CT alone. Adequate assessment of the LT required
before direct arthroscopic visualization and careful probing.
Expectation: Relieving symptoms. Recommended
treatment for LT tears has been simply debridement
with either mechanical shavers or radiofrequency with
concomitant anterior capsulorrhaphy.22

Capsular Laxity: Microinstability of the hip joint due
to repetitive axial rotation and rotation of the capsule
is a common but underdiagnosed condition.

Tips (HERE) History of overuse and supra physiolog-
ic activities of the hip joint. Examination: Painful pas-
sive hip extension and external rotation. Radiology:
At MRA, Anterior capsule thinning and widening in
joint recess.23 Expectation: Preventing micro instabili-
ty by addressing intraoperative pathologies and pica-
tion of the capsule.24
Synovial Pathologies

Inflammatory Diseases: There are many inflammatory diseases that can affect hip joint.

Tips (HERE) History: Positive family history. Previous diagnosis for other joints. Joint stiffness. Examination: Similar with other arthritis causes in the hip but the other joints and remote findings of inflammatory arthritis can be helpful as rheumatoid hand, Heberden nodules, psoriatic plates, etc. Radiology and Laboratory: There is non-specific radiographic changes among hip joint but central joint space loss at false profile images can be assessed for inflammatory diseases (Figure 4). Specific immunologic and biochemistry studies can be done for revealing the underlying inflammatory pathology. Expectation: Controlling the inflammatory process in the hip joint with systemic medication. Addressing the intra-articular pathologies caused by inflammatory process.

Tumoral Lesions of Synovia: Synovial tumor based lesions are rare but these lesions should be kept in mind in differential diagnosis.

Tips (HERE) History and Examination can varies and mostly nonspecific. Radiology: Some of the aggressive lesions can be visualized by plain X rays but MRI is the valuable tool for synovial pathologies. Synovial-based tumor-like lesions can be revealed by MR signal changes, such as the hemosiderin within Pigmented villonodular synovitis (PVNS) or the cartilage within synovial chondromatosis25. Expectation: Elimination of the tumor process via surgical and oncologic treatments.

Loose Bodies: Loose bodies can originate from either traumatic injury, degenerative changes, or other disease processes such as Perthes, spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia, or osteonecrosis19.

Tips (HERE) History: Patients describe mechanical symptoms including catching, locking, clicking, or giving way. Examination: Asymmetry in the hip joint motion. Antalgic gait. Radiology can reveal some of the loose bodies but the exact diagnosis can be done by MRI. Expectation: The symptomatic loose bodies within the hip can cause the destruction of hyaline cartilage with resultant degenerative arthritis. Before destruction of the cartilage the removal of the loose bodies is the goal and the expectation. Arthroscopy is the emerging gold standard for removal of a loose body from a hip joint.

III. Differentiation of Extraarticular Pathologies:

Hilton’s Law, simply stated, The nerve supplying the muscles surrounding a joint also innervates the joint supports the theory that the surrounding tissue of a joint may cause or mimic intra-articular pathologies or vice versa26. Extra-articular hip pain can be assessed by structural surrounding and distant tissues as well as approach with the pain side as anterior, lateral or posterior pain (Figure 6).

Extra-Articular Causes of Hip Pain

Lateral hip pain

Greater Trochanteric Pain Syndrome (GTPS): Includes four conditions: greater trochanteric bursitis, gluteus medius - minimus tears, and external coxa saltans27.

Tips (HERE) History: Lateral hip pain with or without snapping and Trendelenburg sign can be observed. Examination: Provocative tests at physical examina-

Figure 6. Evaluation of extraarticular hip pain according to pain side.
* Can be treated endoscopically.
tion are important for proper diagnosis. Radiology and Laboratory: After classical radiographs, dynamic ultrasound and MRI are useful to reveal pathology\textsuperscript{28}. Expectation: Revealing of symptoms by treatment: Conservative with anti-inflammatory drugs, physical therapy, home exercises, and steroid injections. With resistant cases, endoscopic debridement of the bursitis, release of the ilio-tibial band, and repair of the tears can be performed\textsuperscript{29}.

**Anterior Hip Pain:** It is important to differentiate the hip pain from other organ pains. Core Muscle Injury: Sports Hernia/Pubalgia/Gilmore’s Groin, classical inguinal hernias and gynecologic or urologic problems can be radiate as anterior hip pain. Hip surgeon should assess these systems with the history and also examine these and refer to the related physician when necessary. The mostly encountered anterior hip pain cause is related with iliopsoas tendinitis or internal snapping syndrome.

**Tips (HERE)**

- **History:** Audible click and/or pain is occurred while the iliopsoas tendon moving over the anterior hip structures. Examination: Anterior hip or groin pain, weakness with resisted hip flexion in abduction, or symptomatic clicking or snapping with a positive iliopsoas test. Radiology: Conventional X rays, bony prominence, Dynamic ultrasound and MRI can show structural changes inside the muscle. Expectation: Relieving of the symptoms. If the patient does not benefit from conservative management such as drugs, physical therapy and injections, then an endoscopic release of the iliopsoas may be considered at insertion site or at pelvic rim\textsuperscript{30}.

**Posterior Hip Pain**

**Deep Gluteal Syndrome:** There is a wide spectrum of sciatic nerve entrapment causes which is referred to as deep gluteal syndrome.

**Tips (HERE)**

- **History:** Unable to sit more than half hour, paresthesias and/or radicular pain in the affected limb. Examination: Posterior hip tenderness with palpation and exaggeration of the symptoms with piriformis stretching tests. Pain which generated from spine, sacroiliac or hip joint should be excluded. Radiology: MRI may reveal intensity changes at piriformis muscle or space occupying lesion around the sciatic nerve. Expectation: Relieving the symptoms conservatively as drugs, injections and physical therapy or in resistant cases endoscopic sciatic nerve release can be performed\textsuperscript{31}.

**Ischiofemoral (IF) Impingement**

**Tips (HERE)**

- **History:** Pain at the back of hip joint, pain can be radiate to anterior, groin or distal. mechanical symptoms, neurologic symptoms along sciatic nerve

**Examination:** ischiofemoral impingement Tests (Johnson Test, Dynamic IF Impingement Test)

**Radiology:** Valgus neck, cystic or sclerotic changes at lesser trochanter or ischial tuberosity ischiofemoral space calcification. Ischiofemoral space narrowing with Flamingo view. MRI; ischiofemoral space narrowing, edema signal pattern within IF space, degenerative signal (edema, tearing, fatty change) within quadratus femoris muscle. Tendinopathy (edema and partial tears), changes at hamstring origin\textsuperscript{32,33} (Figure 7). Expectation: Relieving the symptoms by activity modification, gait training, hip bracing, injection of IF space, endoscopic surgical decompression.

**Treatment Algorithm**

Diagnosis and treatment of the hip pain is interwoven. Diagnosis can be change according to response of the treatment. Conservative treatment consist of ac-
Activity modification, resting, drugs, physical therapy, exercises. Invasive treatments consist of injection of anesthetics, steroids, and biologics to the pathology generators. Relief of the symptoms sometimes treat the condition and sometimes indicate the real pathology for surgical treatment (Figure 8). Surgical treatment of the hip pain should be followed by dedicated rehabilitation program. The study was conducted according to international ethical standards.

References


