

Why M.L.T.J. ?

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As it has happened before in the history of scientific communication, with the period of 'enlightenment' in 1665 with the publication of the first two scientific journals: "Les journal des savants" in Paris, and "Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society of London" in London, some people with great passion and love for their discipline have decided to unite their strength to research thoroughly topics which stimulate their curiosity. Our passion, easily deduced from the title of the journal, is about three musculoskeletal tissues which are often underestimated. Although various journals exist in musculoskeletal medicine and in sports traumatology, there is, to our knowledge, no international journal in English that specifically deals about these three soft tissue in a dedicated fashion: Muscle, Ligaments and Tendons. The intent is to embrace within this journal all research in these fields, from basic Science to Clinical and Surgical Biomedicine and Rehabilitation. To give an idea of the numbers, and therefore the clinical and scientific relevance of the problem that we wish to tackle, we only need to think that:

Over a 5-year period, a total of 64,924 patients (27,101 inpatients and 37,823 outpatients) were referred to an Orthopaedic Trauma Unit. Of these patients 2,794 had sustained a definable soft tissue tendinous or ligamentous injury. Soft tissue injuries that occurred in association with fractures were not included in the study. A group of 2,072 patients (74.2%) were male and 722 (25.8%) were female.

The overall annual incidence was 106.2/100,000 per year (166.6/100,000 per year for males and 52.1/100,000 for females) (1). Muscle lesions in soccer alone represent almost one third of all time-loss injuries in men's professional soccer, and 92% of all injuries affect the 4 big muscle groups in the lower limbs (2). Achilles tendon ruptures in Scotland experienced an increased incidence from 4.7/100,000 in 1981 to 6/100,000 in 1994 (3). The annual incidence of Achilles tendon overuse injuries in top-level runners is 7% to 9% (4). Full-thickness rotator cuff tears in nearly 21% of the general population (5). The annual prevalence of ACL injury is reported to be between 0.5 and 6.0% of all female players and between 0.6 and 8.5% of all male players (6). A total of 302,000 new cases of ankle sprains occur each year in the UK, of which 42,000 are severe (7).

Although our attention is usually directed towards muscle, tendon and ligament lesions in athletes, with the aging of Western society and the increasing number of middle aged people practicing sport, we cannot ignore the pathologies of these three tissues in older individuals. We are now faced with new research horizons that aim towards the study of three tissues, looking towards improving the quality of life at an age which, until now, was just associated with early retirement and sedentary lifestyle (8).

MTLJ started in Italy, a country that is historically a leader in medicine, but that, for various reasons, has lost some of its great doctors to other countries around the world. Nevertheless, our aim is global. The internationalization of MTLJ will be guaranteed by giving a scientific home to these great minds, who, although physically abroad, have kept at least part of their ties with Italy, and will be involved in our project.

Our task is arduous, but we believe wholeheartedly in our project, and we enjoy the support of friends, researchers, and clinical scientists from all over the world who share our passion.

Welcome to this brave new world.

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