

ACUTE THORACO - LUMBAR INJURY

Schuermann's disease



A young hockey player aged 16 was treated for an acute thoracolumbar pain.

He gave a history of never having had backache. However the coach decided to let the team do a session of weight training. Straight after this the team played a game of hockey. By the end of the afternoon he had pain which got progressively worse.

Because the injury was acute and the pain was slightly lateral to the spinous processes, a single strip of Leukotape K 50mm was placed over the muscle spasm while the boy flexed forward as much as possible.

After the third treatment, and because the pain was not subsiding sufficiently, he was sent for X-rays. The X-rays showed Scheuermann's disease at the thoraco-lumbar junction – T12 and L1. It was confirmed that his father had the same problem.

From day 4 the strapping technique was changed to a "star" over the spinous processes at the T12/L1 level. The pain subsided rapidly and he returned to hockey practice accepting that he would have to be careful about weight lifting in the future. He has also added core exercises and stretching to his training programme.

Because the aim of this strapping is to lift the skin in the centre of the star, the centre of the tape is put on stretch. The application of the strapping technique for the space correction technique is as follows:

The tape is measured for the desired length. Because the middle will have 100% stretch applied to it, the tape is cut shorter than the measured length.

4 strips of tape are cut and all ends are rounded for better conformity to the skin.

Tape 1: The paper backing is torn at the centre of the tape and rolled back in order for the thumbs and index fingers to hold the paper and tape. At no time is the adhesive section of the tape touched.

The centre third of the tape is stretched and placed over the spinous processes of T12 and L1.

The ends of the tape are gently placed on the skin once the paper backing is removed. The ends are not to be stretched.

Tape 2: In the same manner, the tape is placed at right angles to the first tape. (photo 1)

Tape 3 and 4: The tapes are placed at right angles to each other forming a star. (Photo2)

All strips are then rubbed in order to increase their adhesive properties. Care must be taken to rub the tape from the centre outwards. The ends of the tape must adhere strongly to the skin or they will lift.

For this reason the scholar was advised that the tape is waterproof but, when wet, must be patted dry and not rubbed.

Please forward any queries or comments with respect to injuries, techniques or Leuko products to askleuko@bsnmedical.com for advice from the Leuko Strapping Panel, who are members of the South African Society of Physiotherapy. Selected questions will be loaded onto the BSN Medical website www.bsnmedical.co.za for reference purposes.

Refer to the Leuko Strapping Guide for basic guidelines.

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