

Greater trochanter bursitis and infrared laser therapy: a case series

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Abstract

Introduction: Greater trochanter bursitis is a common and debilitating pathology causing lateral hip pain. Greater trochanter bursitis is usually managed with iliotibial band stretching, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and where persistent, steroid injections. Conventional therapy is often unrewarding with many cases resulting in a chronic pain syndrome and corresponding reduction in quality of life. This paper discusses the successful treatment of two contrasting patients using a 150 mW 808nm infrared laser.

Case presentation: Two cases of trochanter pain syndrome are presented. The first case is a 56 year old Caucasian woman with a complicated five year history of greater trochanter bursitis confirmed by ultrasound. Symptoms responded initially to acupuncture and later steroid injections and point injection therapy but were unresponsive upon recurrence. The introduction of infrared laser resulted in almost complete remission and a return to daily activities. The second patient is a 33 year old Caucasian female with a three year history of escalating severe superficial trochanter pain unresponsive to massage therapy, Bowen therapy and chiropractic. Two treatments of infrared laser were given resulting in a marked reduction in pain which lasted for more than 3 months.

Conclusion: Infrared laser offers a safe, non-invasive and effective treatment method for greater trochanter bursitis and trochanteric pain syndrome. Laser is often used as part of a comprehensive treatment program making it difficult to determine its effectiveness alone. The extensive treatment used in case one gives a clear indication of the role of laser compared to acupuncture, point injection therapy and standard care. The second case indicates lasers effectiveness when used in relative isolation from other treatment. This therapy shows merit even in long standing intransigent cases and should be considered a first line treatment for trochanteric pain syndrome. Further research could be conducted to determine the optimal dosage and distribution of treatment points required to achieve a lasting therapeutic result.

Keywords: Greater trochanter bursitis, trochanteric pain syndrome, infra-red laser. acupuncture, low level laser therapy.