

Persistent Ankle Pain Linked to Tendon Damage

Stubborn, persistent ankle pain may be caused by tears in tendons surrounding the joint that may have resulted from a severe sprain or other trauma. A recent study has reported that 98 percent of patients who underwent surgery to repair the tendons had successful outcomes and were able to resume full activity.

Tears in the tendons around the lateral ankle, known as peroneal tendons, are a frequently overlooked source of chronic ankle pain.

Peroneal tendon tears are frequently misdiagnosed in emergency rooms because they often occur with sprains or ligament damage and the tear isn't visible on an x-ray. Therefore, patients with this injury who receive standard treatment for an ankle sprain will continue to have pain.

The study evaluated the outcomes of 40 patients with chronic ankle pain who had surgery to repair peroneal tendon tears. They had been unsuccessfully treated with anti-inflammatory drugs, rest, ankle bracing, casting or physical therapy, and more than half said their pain was caused by sprains or other trauma.

Others didn't recall a specific pain-producing incident. All subjects initially were examined and diagnosed and treated before the tendon tear was confirmed by a podiatric foot and ankle surgeon.

A large percentage of ankle tendon tears initially are misdiagnosed by a wide variety of health care providers. When there is persistent pain and non-operative treatments fail to provide relief, a thorough evaluation of the ankle and an MRI exam or an ultrasound will determine if the tendons are torn.

Cumberland Foot and Ankle can not only arrange MRI services for our patients, but diagnostic foot and ankle ultrasound is available IN our office. Call for an appointment.