

Preliminary results after conservative treatment of fractures of the lateral clavicle. A retrospective study.

Annika Winther, Sammer Al-Saadi, Bo Sanderhoff Olsen, Anne Kathrine Belling Sørensen
Orthopaedic department, Herlev hospital

Introduction:

Approximately 25% of clavicle fractures are located laterally and can be treated non-operative or with different surgical techniques. No agreement upon treatment of fractures of the lateral clavicle exists.

Non-union and early onset of acromioclavicular arthrosis are reported to be frequent complications to fracture of the lateral clavicle. Neer reported that 50 % of non-unions of the clavicle fractures originates from fracture of the lateral clavicle fractures. This has led several authors to recommend primary operative treatment.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the functional outcome of non-operative treatment of lateral clavicle fractures.

Material and method:

A datasearch on diagnosed clavicle fractures in the casualty ward in the years 2004-2008 was performed. X-rays were evaluated and patients that met the inclusion criteria: age > 16 years, lateral clavicle fracture, mentally capable and no surgery performed, were included in the study.

195 patients were treated for a fracture to the lateral part of the clavicle, 15 were surgically treated mainly due to gross dislocation and skin problems and therefore excluded and 12 were excluded due to death. Preliminary 26 patients of the ongoing study have been evaluated with Constant score and radiological assessment of the injured clavicle.

Results:

No significant difference in Constant score was found between the injured 86 (range 56-98) and non-injured shoulder 90 (range 75-100) at an average follow-up of 46 months (range 25-68 months)

We found 4 patients with non-unions and 7 patients with arthrosis of the acromioclavicular joint, all asymptomatic. 2 patients presented with both a non-union and arthrosis to the acromioclavicular joint.

Conclusion:

Non-operative treatment of lateral clavicle fractures results in a good functional outcome at medium length follow-up. Asymptomatic non-union and arthrosis of the acromio-clavicular joint doesn't seem to adversely affect the functional outcome at medium term of follow-up.

