

Pain course after foot and ankle surgery

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Introduction/Purpose: Most surgeons believe, that the postoperative pain course after foot and ankle surgery differs from other joints due to the initial protection and immobilization. The knowledge of the normal pain course after foot and ankle surgery is important to know for the surgeon and correctly inform patients preoperative and may help to identify abnormal postoperative healing courses.

Methods: 180 patients were enclosed in a prospective study. 66,7% were female and 33.3 % were male. All patients had primary surgery for foot and ankle diseases at a tertiary care foot and ankle center. The pain course was measured using a VAS over a one year period. The mean age was 53,2 (± 13.6) years.

Results: The mean pain level was 4.56 (± 2.0) preoperative. In the first postoperative week it was 3.5 (± 2.18) and declined until the 6th postoperative week to 1.57 (± 1.52) it increased again after the sixth week up to 1.95 (± 1.63) and decreased then again to 1.09 (± 1.51) one year postoperative. The pain level in patient with tendon surgeries tended to be higher in the first 12 weeks postoperative than that of patients with bony procedures.

Conclusion: The pain course after Foot and ankle surgery shows a characteristic curve with a significant increase of the pain level after 6 weeks. A comprehensive patient information can increase satisfaction rates of the patient. Any abnormal postoperative pain course should arise suspicion of a complicated healing period.

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