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Healing the heel with homoeopathy - A case report on plantar fasciitis

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Abstract

plantar fasciitis affects the plantar fascia of foot and is a leading cause of inferior heel pain, which is worse at first few step in the morning. It mainly affects working age group. Diagnosis is mainly made clinically. Treatment include NSAIDS, orthotics, corticosteroid injection. As presenting complaints and modalities are similar in most of the plantar fasciitis cases so individualized homoeopathic medicine have significant role in managing it.

Case summary: A case of 55-year-old female presented with severe pain in heel since 5 months, which worsen at first few step at morning, rising from prolonged sitting. Diagnosis was made by clinical examination using windlas test which was further confirmed by USG. Case was repertorized through synthesis repertory and pulsatilla was prescribed on the basis of symptom similarity. Follow up was evaluated using Foot Function index scale (FFI-Scale).

Keywords: Plantar fasciitis, homoeopathy, heel pain, FFI scale

Introduction

plantar fasciitis is leading cause of heel pain. Plantar fasciitis affects the plantar fascia, which is a band of fibrous tissue that supports the foot arch and also connects the calcaneus to the toes. Prevalence of PF among the general population is about 10% which includes 83% of adult population between 25 to 65 years, that is mainly working-age individual. Highest occurrence is seen in people between 40 to 60 year ^[1].

Patient often present with a pain at the inferior and medial heel. Pain is sharp and worse with the first few steps out of the bed in morning. Long period of standing and steps after period of inactivity will exacerbate the symptoms. Plantar fasciitis is one of the most common causes of heel pain, often associated with a calcaneal spur ^[2].

Common Risk factors are- BMI >27kg/m², runners, occupation requiring prolong standing and walking, sedentary life, pes cavus, pes planus.

Diagnosis is made on the basis of physical examination and clinical presentation.

On physical examination, the patient will be tender to palpation on the proximal plantar fascial insertion at the anteromedial calcaneus. The windlass test is positive if heel pain reproduced by forced dorsiflexion of the toes at the metatarsophalangeal joints with the ankle stabilized. Imaging technique like USG & MRI can aid in confirming the diagnosis of plantar fasciitis ^[3].

Differential diagnosis- Calcaneus injury, Infection, Sickle cell bony pain, S1 radiculopathy, neuropathic pain, tendinitis, osteoporosis.

Traditional medical management includes NSAIDS, orthotics, corticosteroid injections & ultrasound therapy as conservative treatment while the surgical intervention include partial or complete fasciotomy ^[4].

Homoeopathic medicines have demonstrated good results in treating musculoskeletal system disease. There are various medicines whose sphere of action is mainly on heel and fascia. Some important homeopathic medicines are- Rhus tox, Ruta graveolus, Phytolacca decandra, Aranea diadema, *Valeriana officinalis*, pulsatilla, Ledum pal.

Foot Function Index (FFI) was developed to measure the impact of foot pathology on function in terms of pain, disability and activity restriction. The FFI is a self-administered index consisting of 17 items divided into 3 sub-scales. Pain (5 item), disability (9 item), Activity limitation (3 item), score of each question on a scale from 0 to 10 ^[5].

Case report

Presenting complaint: A 55-year-old female patient presented to the OPD of GHMC Bhopal on 17/04/2025 with complaints of bilateral heel pain, which she has been experiencing for the past 5 months. Pain started from the left heel at present right > left

Pain is aggravated during 1st step after waking rising after prolong sitting

Character of pain is sharp and tearing.

Paient also complaints of burning in sole during summer.

History of presenting illness: Patient reported the onset of heel pain approximately 5 months ago which gradually increases in intensity over the time.

According to her she had experienced a similar episode of heel pain last year though of lesser severity.

Treatment taken: VIT D and analgesic which gave temporary relief

Past history: Contact dermatitis 1 year back took homoeopathic treatment and now has no related complaint

Family history: Non contributory

Physical general

Apetite - Good, nonvegetarian

Desire - Sweet

Investigation

Thirst - Thirstless (approx. 4-5 glass /day)

Tongue - Moist, clean

Stool - 2 times/day

Urine - Burning during summer

Sweat - More on axilla, no particular smell

Mental general: Emotional, weeps on every little things, she is very mild and soft spoken, fear of dark and ghost. Does not like to be alone.

Systemic examination

CVS - S1 S2 audible, no added murmur

CNS - Conscious, oriented

RS - B/L chest clear, AEBE

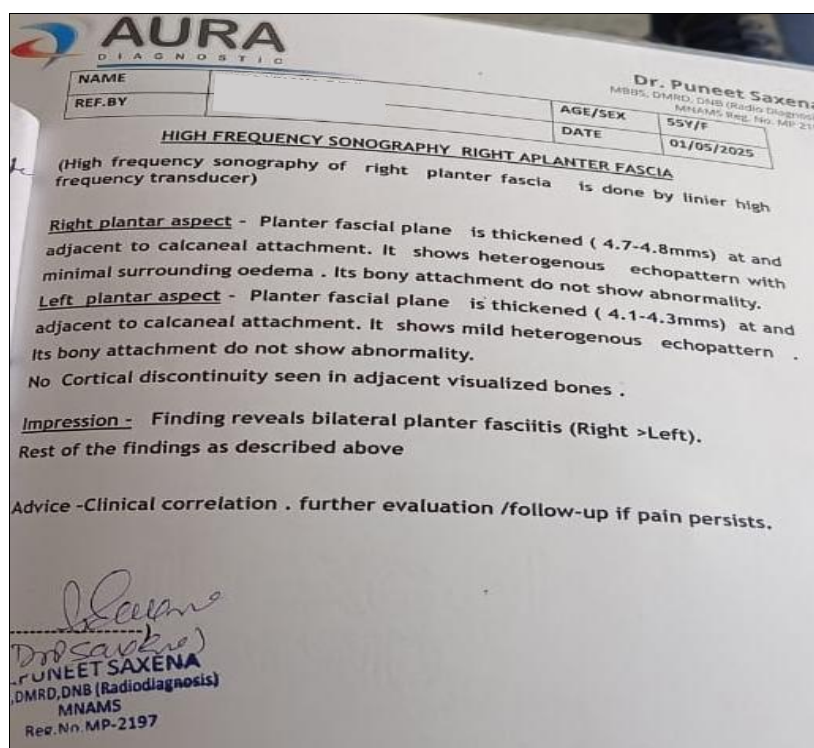
BP - 100/70 mmhg

Weight - 59kg

Pulse - 68 beat/mint

Local examination

- Tenderness present on palpation in both heel
- Windlass test-positive (pain reproduced by forced dorsiflexion of the toes at the metatarsophalangeal joints with the ankle stabilized)
- Gait -antalgic



Diagnosis: Plantar fasciitis

Analysis and evaluation: A/C to JT kent

Mental general

- Weeps easily
- desire company
- fear of dark, ghost

Physical general

- Thirstless,

- Sweet desire,
- Thermal-hot

Particular

- Pain in b/l heel < morning 1st step, rising from prolong sitting
- >Continue walking

Rubrics

Mind - Company - desire for

Mind - Fear - Dark of

Mind - Mildness

Stomach - Thirstless

Extremities - PAIN - Feet - Heels

Extremities - Inflammation - Fasciitis; Plantar

Generals - Food and Drink - Sweet desire

Generals - Season - Summer agg

Repertorial result: Synthesis

MIND	Remedies	ΣSym	ΣDeg	Symptoms
1 MIND - COMPANY -	puls.	7	18	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
desire for	lyc.	7	15	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
2 MIND - FEAR - dark; of	ars.	7	14	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
3 MIND - MILDNESS	phos.	7	14	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
STOMACH	ant-c.	7	12	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
4 STOMACH - THIRSTLESS	calc.	7	12	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
EXTREMITIES	nat-c.	7	12	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
5 EXTREMITIES - INFLAMMATIO	kali-c.	7	11	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
fasciitis; plantar	sep.	7	11	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
6 EXTREMITIES - PAIN - Feet -	bell.	7	10	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
Heels	nat-m.	7	10	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
GENERALS	nux-v.	7	9	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
7 GENERALS - FOOD and DRINK				
desire				
8 GENERALS - SEASONS - summ				
agg.				

Remedy selected: On the basis of symptom similarity and constitution of the patient Pulsatilla was prescribed.

Prescription

Rx

Pulsatilla 200 OD for 5 days

Rubrum 30 BD X 15 days

Follow-up assessment was carried out with the FFI scale

FFI scale

Date	Pain (50)	Disability (90)	Activity limitation (30)	FFI score total/170 x 100	Prescription
17/04/25	41	45	5	53.5%	Pulsatilla 200 OD X 5 days
1/05/25	18	29	2	28.8%	Pulsatilla 200 OD X 7 days
28/07/25	5	6	0	6.47%	Rubrum 30 bd x 10 days

Result

Patient reported significant improvement in pain and disability. FFI score reduced from 53.5% to 6.47%

Conclusion

This case report emphasizes the role of individualized homoeopathic medicine in managing heel pain diagnosed as plantar fasciitis.

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