

'Non-surgical' method for chronic tendinosis of the Achilles tendon

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Researchers have found an alternative, "non-surgical" method to treat chronic tendinosis (tendinitis) of the Achilles tendon that fails conservative treatment, according to a study performed at the Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University in Chicago, IL.

Seventeen patients underwent sonographically-guided Achilles tendon debridement, a procedure that helps to break up any [scar tissue](#) within the tendon that might cause it to become stiffer than normal and to encourage the body's own repair process to heal the tendon damage. All patients had at least six months of failed conservative treatment (rest and ice, heel lifts, orthotics and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen and physical therapy). "Out of the 17 patients surveyed after the procedure, approximately 60% of patients reported their symptoms had either completely resolved or were markedly improved," said Thomas Grant, DO, lead author of the study.

"We believe this procedure will be a treatment option before performing surgery for patients suffering from Achilles tendinosis that have failed conservative measures. Traditionally surgery was the only treatment available to patients failing conservative management," said Dr. Grant.

"The true incidence of Achilles tendinosis is uncertain. Studies in runners suggest about 10-15% incidence in this higher risk group. Achilles tendinosis is also relatively common in non-athletes. Men and women of all age groups are affected," he said.

"Although most patients respond to conservative management, a significant number do not respond and have chronic symptoms that limit their activities. Ultrasound-guided Achilles debridement is a viable non-surgical option for these [patients](#) with no adverse effects that we have seen," said Dr. Grant.

This study will be presented at the 2009 ARRS Annual Meeting in Boston, MA, on Wednesday, April 29.

Source: American Roentgen Ray Society

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