Author's response to reviews

Title: The fabella syndrome - a rare cause of posterolateral knee pain. A review of the literature and two case reports.

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Version: 4  Date: 26 February 2014

Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer's report

Title: The fabella syndrome - a rare cause of posterolateral knee pain. Two case reports and review of the literature.

Version: 2

Date: 10 February 2014

Reviewer: Francesco Oliva

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
I suggest first English revision by a native

The manuscript has been corrected by a native British English speaker as the reviewer suggested.

Background:
Please cancel or write in a more scientific way the below phrase:

It was the purpose of this study to firstly perform a standardized literature search on the current knowledge of the fabella syndrome and reported treatments and to secondly report two cases from the own population treated with this rare syndrome.

The sentence has been changed to: 

It was the purpose of this article to firstly report about a standardized literature search on the current knowledge of the fabella syndrome and to secondly report results of two cases treated with this rare syndrome.

a) Literature search
A “pub med” research was performed using the term “fabella syndrome”. The publications were analysed for symptoms described, therapies applied, indications for surgery and clinical results reported.

Why only pub med? Is it a Metanalysys or what?
We chose the PubMed Database for literature research as PubMed contains over 23 million citations and articles related to biomedical topics. As well it is the most frequently used and the most “valuable” database according to contents of scientific literature.

As little is published about the fabella syndrome and many issues such as the occurrence of the fabella as well the effect and results of both the physiotherapeutic and surgical treatment still remain inexplicit, PubMed search did not provide an analysis summing up current knowledge of the fabella syndrome. Thus performing a meta-analysis would require sufficient reviews and studies addressing the topic and analysing it.

The Authors need to describe the surgical procedure that they have choice for these cases. Please look at the anatomy in the posterior part of the.


Anatomical considerations in hamstring tendon harvesting for anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction.

Charalambous CP, Kwaees TA.

According to the reviewers suggestions above we extended the description of the surgical procedure. As well we did cite the paper mentioned describing the harvesting of the hamstring tendons on the medial side of the knee despite the fact that the fabellae we resected were located in the posterolateral aspect of the knee.

I suggest to revise the whole paper and rewrite in a more Scientific way maybe it will be useful control other case report published on BMC and try to do the same.

Thank you very much for your valuable suggestion. We did compare the existing manuscript with other case reports published on BMC. In contrast to further case reports this manuscript includes a review and summary of literature and therefore the contend is more extensive and contains more partitions than a usual. Due to the circumstance that case reports are always limited in their scientific conclusion our primary intention was to report two more cases causing posterolateral pain without nerve palsy in which resection of the fabella alleviated the symptoms as described earlier. As well the topic of unnecessary surgery determined by rare knowledge about the fabella symptom and its treatment should be addressed. We reported about two patients who underwent (possibly unnecessary) arthroscopical surgery for the same symptoms before surgical resection of the fabella. The pain wasn’t alleviated thus from a patients perspective surgery wasn’t successful because of either misinterpretation of the symptoms described or lack of knowledge about the
fabella symptom and its therapy. Therefore we recapitulated differential diagnoses presenting with pain in the posterolateral aspect of the knee such as lateral meniscus tears, Baker’s cyst, foreign bodies, localized pigmented villonodular synovitis and osteochondral fragments.

Please add Ref in the differential diagnosis line 367-370 as the example below:

Oliva F, Frizziero A One step open synovectomy without adjuvant therapy for diffuse pigmented villonodular synovitis of the knee in a soccer player.


Thank you very much for the precious literature you provided. We cited the literature in the section where the differential diagnoses including the PVNS are summed up.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests: I declare that I have no competing interests
Reviewer's report

Title: The fabella syndrome - a rare cause of posterolateral knee pain. Two case reports and review of the literature.

Version: 2

Date: 11 February 2014

Reviewer: Antonio Frizziero

Reviewer's report:

176 to understand better the clinical case should be fundamental specify the clinical and radiological exams performed by the patient and the reason why an arthroscopical partial meniscectomy was performed.

Thank you very much for your comment. As suggested by the reviewer we added details about physical examination and emphasized that prior surgery was performed for the same symptoms.

Both patients underwent standard clinical examination (Lachman Test, anterior & posterior drawer Test, medial and lateral collateral ligament test, meniscus test, palpation of posterolateral aspect of the knee) and radiographic diagnostics such as ultrasound, plain radiographs (a.p. and lateral view) and MRI.

Both patients underwent previous surgery for the same symptoms they were presenting to us.

We reported about two patients who underwent (possibly unnecessary) arthroscopical surgery for the same symptoms before surgical resection of the fabella. The pain wasn’t alleviated thus from a patient’s perspective surgery wasn’t successful because of either misinterpretation of the symptoms described or lack of knowledge about the fabella symptom and its therapy. Therefore we recapitulated differential diagnoses presenting with pain in the posterolateral aspect of the knee such as lateral meniscus tears, Baker’s cyst, foreign bodies, localized pigmented villonodular synovitis and osteochondral fragments. By reporting these the topic of unnecessary surgery determined by rare knowledge about the fabella symptom and its treatment should be addressed.
184 the authors should better specify the Tegner score related to the evaluated patients

    As the reviewer suggested we added the preoperative score of both patients.

185 It’s not indicated the reference of IKDC score

    As the reviewer suggested we added the reference in the text.


195 Literature review data are not clearly specified

    According to the reviewers suggestion we changed the sentence to: The review of the literature searching the PubMed online data revealed five case reports and three studies with more than 10 patients in each paper [8–10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20].

199 tabs of the study are both numbered like “tab 1”

    We corrected the table numbers into “table 1” and “table 2”.

227 you have to remove the reference and shift it to line 236

    As the reviewer suggested we shifted the reference to the end of the section about Takebe’s publication content.

236 It’s better to explain also the results of the cited study

    We added the missing reference to the section. The content of Müllers findings are explained on the previous page in the last part of the “review of literature” section. To minimize redundant information we did not mention the results again.
It’s necessary to indicate the appropriate reference

As the reviewer suggested we added the reference in the text following the author’s name.

It’s necessary to indicate the appropriate reference

As the reviewer suggested we added the reference in the text following the author’s name.

It’s necessary to indicate the appropriate reference

As the reviewer suggested we added the reference in the text following the author’s name.


Thank you very much for this correction as well. The reference manager must have included the wrong date. We did change the reference and corrected it to


Table 2 doesn’t exist

As described earlier we corrected the caption of the tables.

It’s necessary to indicate the appropriate reference

As the reviewer suggested we added the reference in the text.

The publication year of is wrong
According to the reviewers suggestion we corrected the reference including the year it was published.

527-528 there isn't reference 28 in the article

This reference disappeared after updating the reference list.

529 there isn't reference 29 in the article

This reference disappeared after updating the reference list.

**Level of interest:** An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.