

Diagnosis of Myofascial Pain Syndrome

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KEYWORDS

- Myofascial pain • Trigger points • Active trigger points • Latent trigger points
- Muscle • Referred pain • Diagnosis

KEY POINTS

- Myofascial pain is a common condition that occurs as a primary source of pain as well as a comorbid pain with other conditions.
- The source of pain in myofascial pain is the myofascial trigger point that is a small region of hardness and tenderness in a taut band of muscle.
- Many of the pain syndromes are caused by pain referred from the trigger point region.
- The diagnosis of myofascial pain in the clinical setting is best made by palpation of the trigger point, moving in a cross-fiber direction perpendicular to the direction of the fibers.
- Evaluation of the patient must include an assessment of those factors that either predispose the patient to the development of myofascial pain or that are comorbid with it.

INTRODUCTION

Myofascial pain (MP) is a widespread and universal cause of soft tissue pain. Physicians commonly overlook this condition because of lack of awareness and training but it is a relatively simple diagnosis. The central feature of MP syndrome (MPS) is the myofascial trigger point (MTrP), a very small, localized area of muscle contraction that is hard to the touch, and that is very tender. The trigger point is always located on a discrete band of hardness located within a muscle. The diagnosis of MPS is made by palpation of the MTrP.

FEATURES OF THE MTRP

The MTrP is always located on a tight or taut band of muscle. An MTrP that causes pain is always tender to palpation. When stimulated mechanically by palpation or by

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