

CLINICAL PROFILE OF PATIENTS WITH CARPEL TUNNEL SYNDROME

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ABSTRACT:

Objective: To review the clinical characteristics and demography of carpal tunnel syndrome

Material and Methods: A descriptive (cross sectional) study was done for 250 patients in the department of Neurosurgery Naseer Teaching Hospital, Peshawar from 1st January 2015 to 31st December 2016. Patients were reviewed for epidemiological data including age, gender, symptomatic side, dominance and neurophysiological grades. Data was analyzed by using SPSS version 20.

Results: A total of 250 patients (210 female and 40 male) were included in study. Mean age was 48.5year. female to male ratio was 5.2:1. CTS was most commonly seen in the age group of 46-60years. bilaterality was seen in 137(55%). Mild form of CTS was the most common 126(50.4) followed by moderate 120(48%) severe and very severe in minimum number of patients. Paraesthesia 250(100%) , weakness in thenar eminence 230(92%), nocturnal pain 225 (90%), pain after physical activity 212(85%) are the most frequent symptoms observed. co morbidities were found in form of Diabetes and hypothyroidism.

Conclusion: The demographic pattern of CTS in our study was almost similar to the pattern seen in studies conducted at other places. Sensory symptoms and dominant hand involvement is more common with female dominancy.

Key words: carpal tunnel syndrome, demography, entrapment neuropathy

INTRODUCTION:

Carpel tunnel syndrome is the most well known form of median nerve entrapment¹⁻⁶ and accounts for 90% of all entrapment neuropathies⁷. It was first described by Paget in 1854⁸, and is defined as a mononeuropathy or radiculopathy caused by mechanical distortion produced by compressive force⁹. It was believed to be present in 3.8% of the general population¹⁰. Incidence rates of up to 276:100,000 annually has been reported¹¹, with a prevalence rate up to 9.2% in women and 6% in men¹². More common in females than in males, its occurrence is commonly bilaterally with a peak age range of 40 to 60 years¹³. Congenital predisposition is the commonest cause of CTS in which carpal tunnel is simply narrower in some people than in others especially middle aged people. Other factors which contribute in its causation are stressful work, injury, fluid retention and the development of any space occupying lesions in the tunnel^{14,15}.

The symptoms and signs are caused by compression of the median nerve along the carpal tunnel, which is formed on the distal, medial and lateral sides by the carpal bones and on the volar surface by the deep transverse carpal ligaments¹⁶. Primary features of CTS include pain in the hand, unpleasant tingling, pain or numbness in the distal distribution of the median nerve (thumb, index, middle finger and the radial side of the ring finger)¹⁷, and the reduction of the grip strength and function of the affected hand¹⁸. Symptoms tend to be worse at night, and clumsiness is reported during the day with activities requiring wrist flexion¹⁹. Patients often describe a phenomenon termed the 'flick sign' which shaking or flicking their wrists relieves symptoms²⁰. Others are Tinel sign triggered by digital percussion to the level of carpal tunnel and flexor retinaculum, and Phalen test, there will be paraesthesia in the region innervated by the median nerve after wrist flexion for 30-120 seconds²¹.

The nerve conduction studies is a definite diagnostic test for CTS^{22,23}. The treatment for CTS is either surgical or conservative. Surgical treatment is generally recommended for those with severe CTS, while conservative treatments are recommended for the initial management of those who have intermittent symptoms or in whom surgery is contraindicated²⁴. Examples of conservative treatment include oral steroids, steroid injection, physical therapy, electrotherapy, night splinting and workplace alteration.²⁵

The aim of this study is to review the clinical characteristics and demography of CTS cases presented to a tertiary care hospital. It emphasizes the health care planners and providers at government, private and personal level to initiate prevention and management plan in the light of local as well as international past and recent scientific research findings and updates.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

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This descriptive (cross sectional) study was conducted at Neurosurgery unit of Naseer Teaching Hospital, Peshawar from 1st January 2015 to 31st December 2016. Sample size was 250 and sampling technique was consecutive (non probability) sampling. Approval was obtained from hospital ethical committee. Inclusion criteria were patients with one or more signs or symptom of median nerve compression at level of carpal tunnel. Exclusion criteria was patients who have underwent previous neurolysis of the median nerve at the carpal tunnel level and those with known radiculopathy.

Patients were reviewed for epidemiological data including age, gender, symptomatic side, dominance, neurophysiological grades i.e. Mild, moderate, severe and very severe according to American association of Electrodiagnostic Medication. The patients were divided into four different age groups 15-30 years, 31-45 years, 46-60 years and greater than 60 years. Neurophysiological grades were defined as (a) mild CTS: prolonged distal sensory peak latency with + decreased sensory amplitude. (b) moderate CTS: abnormal median sensory peak latencies with prolongation of the distal motor latency. (c) severe CTS: prolonged motor and sensory distal peak latency either with allow or absent sensory nerve action potential or compound muscle action potential. (d) very severe CTS: absent thenar motor or sensory response either with a present or absent lumbrical response.

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Data was analyzed by using SPSS 20.0 and subjected to descriptive analysis. Categorical data was analyzed in form of percentages and presented in form of tables.

RESULTS:

A total of 250 patients including 210 females and 40 males were included in the study. A mean age of 48.5 years was found in females and 50.5 years was observed in males. The female to male ratio was 5.2:1 and this disorder was most commonly seen in the age group 46 – 60 years. Bilaterality of this disorder was seen in 137(55%) subjects. (Table no.I)

Mild form of CTS was the most commonest form noticed in 126(50.4%) of subjects, followed by moderate form. Severe and very severe forms were seen in small minority (Table no.II). Bilateral CTS pattern was observed most frequently in females predominating in 192(86.48%) female subjects. (Table no.III)

Paraesthesia was the most prevalent symptom, being present in all cases followed by, weakness at thenar eminences in 230(92%), nocturnal pain 225(90%) and daytime pain in 212(85%). Proximal irradiation of pain to entire upper limb was reported by 175(70%) of subjects. 162(65%) of cases complained of sleeping disorders secondary to the symptoms. Majority of cases had three or more symptoms of median nerve compression at the carpal tunnel level as seen in 232(93%) patients. (Table no. IV)

Co morbidities were found in form of diabetes which was the most frequent disorder found in 80(32%) cases, followed by hypothyroidism which was observed in 35(12%) cases while 3(1.2%) patients were pregnant.

TABLE NO.I: DEMOGRAPHICAL DATA (n=250)

Gender	Frequency	percentage
Female	210	84%
Male	40	16%
Total	250	100%
Age Group in years		
15-30years	10	4%
31-45years	85	34%
46-60years	93	37.2%
>60years	62	24.8%
Total	250	100%
Laterality		
Bilateral	137	55%
Unilateral	113	45%
Left	34	30%
Right	79	70%

TABLE NO. II: CTS CATEGORIZATION (n=250)

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Mild	126	50.4%
Moderate	120	48%
Severe	1	0.4%
Very severe	3	1.2%
Total	250	100%

TABLE NO.III : CTS PATTERN AMONG GENDER (n=250)

	Unilateral	Bilateral
Female	18(64.28%)	192(86.48%)
Male	10(35.7%)	30(13.5%)
Total	28(100%)	222(100%)

TABLE NO.IV : FREQUENCY OF SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Clinical Feature	Frequency	Percentage
Paraesthesia	250	100%
Weakness in thenar eminence	230	92%
Nocturnal Pain	225	90%
Pain after physical activity	212	85%
² Proximal irradiation of pain to Upper limb	175	70%
Sleeping disorder secondary to symptoms	162	65%

** Single patient can have more than one clinical feature.

DISCUSSION:

² Carpel tunnel syndrome is the most common peripheral neuropathy ²⁶ and its diagnosis is based on the combination of clinical signs and symptoms and electromyographic studies ²⁷. It is estimated that 1:1000 people are diagnosed annually with CTS according to an English study ²⁸.

¹ In our study, the higher predominance of CTS is in females with a ratio of 5.2:1 which is comparable to that of other studies where this ratio was observed to be 5.6:1, 5.4:1, 5:1 and 4.9:1 ^{29,30,16,32}. Mean age of CTS subjects in our study was found to be 48.5 years in females and 50.5 years in males with peak incidence in the age group of 46-60 years. Malibary ¹ et al in their study conducted at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia recruited 336 subjects and observed the mean age in ⁵ males was 52.4 years and 48.5 years in males ³². Likewise Abumunaser et al in their study reported the mean age in females to be 45.5 years and 48.5 years in males ³³ which is much closer to our results.

¹ Regarding the laterality, Malibary HM et al in 2013 observed that 90.5% of their patients had bilateral CTS, this figure is observed to be 88.8% in our study. Similarly, 11.2% of our cases had unilateral CTS whereas it was reported as 9.5% in the same study ³².

Paraesthesias was the most prevalent symptom, as it was observed in all of our cases, followed by weakness in thenar eminence which was seen in 92% of our subjects. These figures were observed as almost same with paraesthesias in all and weakness in same number of subjects by Azevedo JWV et al ²¹. Likewise sleeping disorder was observed in 60% of their subjects and seen in 65% of our subjects.

¹ This study was confined to demographic profile with CTS category and pattern. It has the importance in ¹ the perspective of highlighting the consistency of our findings with those of other studies, to build a solid evidence of epidemiology, demographic and clinical profile of this disease.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the demographic pattern of CTS in our study was almost similar to the pattern seen in studies conducted at other places. Sensory symptoms and dominant hand was more common. Over all predominant age group was 46-60years with female dominance. Future studies are required to find out correlating risk factors and associated diseases in both genders.

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