

Two-year follow-up of low-level laser therapy for elderly with painful adhesive capsulitis of the shoulder.

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INTRODUCTION: This paper reports on the medium-term mean 2-year prospective follow-up of a patient cohort of 35 unselected elderly patients with mean age of 65 years who visited our tertiary referral pain center for painful adhesive capsulitis of the shoulder managed with low-level laser therapy (LLLT). **MATERIALS AND METHODS:** All patients in this prospective cohort study had documentation of the diagnosis by contrast-enhanced magnetic resonance imaging before study entry and all had failed to respond to a combination of conventional physical therapy and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications for not fewer than 4 weeks. LLLT, at a wavelength of 810 nm emitted from a GaAlAs semiconductor laser device with 5.4 J per point and a power density of 20 mW/cm², was employed to irradiate six predetermined anatomic points and two acupuncture points. The treatment regimen consisted of three sessions of treatment per week for 8 consecutive weeks. Each treatment session lasted 180 seconds. Serial clinical assessment was undertaken using the Constant-Murley shoulder score. **RESULTS:** A total of 50 painful shoulder joints were treated, as a number of elderly presented with bilateral symptoms. All but four painful shoulders showed significant improvement in Constant-Murley shoulder score at the end of 8-weeks' LLLT treatment and, surprisingly, the improvement was found maintained at follow-up assessments at 1 year and 2 years. **CONCLUSION:** We conclude that LLLT is a viable option in the conservative treatment of shoulder pain arising from adhesive capsulitis of the shoulder in the elderly, with a positive clinical result of more than 90% and with clinical efficacy both in the short-term and the medium-term.