LONG-TERM PROGNOSIS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH PLANTAR HEEL PAIN

Introduction Plantar heel pain (PHP) used to be considered a self-limiting condition, where pain was thought to resolve within a year after onset. A number of studies with varying quality of outcomes and small sample-sizes have questioned the benign nature of PHP. The aim of this study was to explore the long-term prognosis of individuals treated for PHP.

Materials and Methods Patients treated for PHP at Aalborg University Hospital between 2011–2018 were in 2020 asked to complete online questionnaires. Questionnaires included demographic and patient characteristics, heel pain during the past 4 weeks, mean pain intensity during the past week (0–10 numerical rating scale), work situation, comorbidities, and the EQ5D.

Results So far, 254 individuals completed the questionnaires (38% response rate). Mean age was 54 years (±12) and median period of heel pain was 20.5 months (IQR 9–60). At follow-up, 55% (95%CI 49–61%) still reported heel pain during the past 4 weeks with a median pain intensity of 5 (IQR 3–7). 76–86% of these reported concomitant musculoskeletal pain. During follow-up, 18% changed their work assignments due to heel pain, 25% reported sick leave due to heel pain (median days off work 21 (IQR 7–90)) and 27% reported depressive symptoms on the EQ5D.

Conclusion Despite specialized care, more than half still reported PHP up to 10 years after treatment. The condition was associated with sick leave and changed work assignments among several patients. These results emphasise the large impact PHP may have on individuals and highlights the need for more effective treatments.