Retrospective Case Review Series of Radiofrequency Ablation for Knee Osteoarthritis

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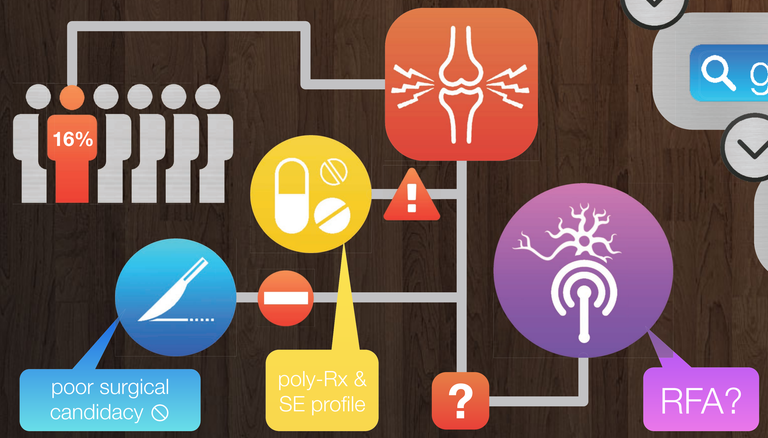
Introduction

Knee osteoarthritis (OA) is a common cause of chronic pain, affecting 16% of adults over the age of 45.

Treatment options, especially for those deemed poor surgical candidates, remain limited. Recently, treatment of knee OA pain using radiofrequency ablation (RFA) has been gaining popularity, however there exists a paucity of evidence on the efficacy of this procedure.

This case series aims to provide additional information to support the use of RFA as a viable treatment option for pain physicians and their patients.

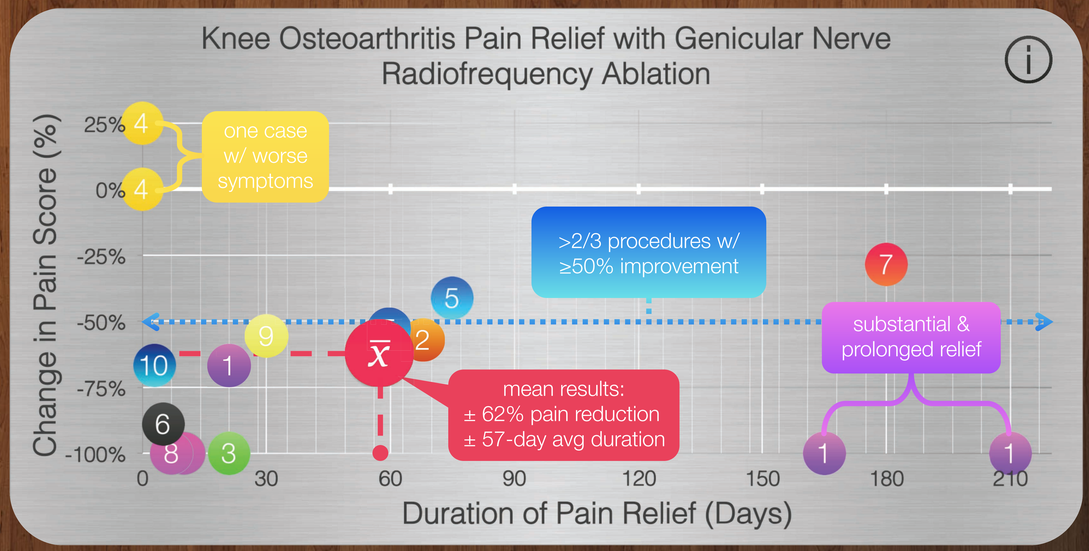


Materials & Methods

A retrospective review of OA cases treated at a tertiary care pain clinic from 2012-2014 was performed to identify patients who had undergone RFA after successful diagnostic block of the superior medial, superior lateral and inferior medial branches of the genicular nerves.

IRB approval was granted to review charts from the initial clinic visit through post-procedure follow-up, and information was gathered including pain scores and duration of pain relief.

Ten patients and 15 procedures were included in the study.



Results

Five RFA procedures yielded complete pain relief for up to 210 days, while 11 RFA procedures led to >50% decrease in pain for an average of 55 days.

All but one patient reported improvement of pain symptoms; that patient endorsed a 25% increase in pain following RFA and no change in pain severity following a subsequent RFA procedure.

Conclusions

These promising results add to the evidence supporting the use of RFA as an effective treatment modality for chronic knee OA pain.

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