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Functional outcome after tibial tubercle transfer for the painful patella alta.

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Abstract

Twenty-five patients with painful patella alta without symptomatic subluxation were identified in a prospective database. All patients had a distal tibial tubercle transfer and preoperative knee arthroscopy. The mean postoperative followup was 2.4 years. These patients were matched with healthy volunteers. Patellofemoral scores using the scoring systems of Kujala et al and Lysholm and Gillquist were collected prospectively. The Short Form-36 health survey and the Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Osteoarthritis Index were used postoperatively. Significant improvement in the patellofemoral scores was documented postoperatively; however, the healthy volunteers had significantly higher patellofemoral scores when compared with the patients who were treated surgically. For the three Short Form-36 survey parameters based on physical health (physical functioning, role physical, and bodily pain), there were no statistically significant differences between the patients and the United States age-matched norms; data are available in the Short Form-36 survey manual. Patients with Grade 2 chondromalacia (fissuring and fragmentation less than 1.25 cm) had significantly better scores in pain and function domains of the Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Osteoarthritis Index compared with patients with Grade 3 (fissuring and fragmentation greater than 1.25 cm) and Grade 4 (erosion down to bone) changes. Distal tibial tubercle transfer is a beneficial procedure for treating patients with painful patella alta