

Argus Orthopaedic Zone

Arthroscopic Surgery Of The Hip. Really?

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Arthroscopic surgery of most of our joints is fairly commonplace especially in the knee. The knee was the first joint that was subjected to what is called endoscopic evaluation. An Orthopaedic Surgeon in Japan popularized the procedure there in the 1960's which then was brought to North America by 2 or 3 Orthopaedic Surgeons who went to Japan to learn about it. It took off in the U.S. in the 1970's and has been evolving ever since.

Hip Arthroscopic Surgery

I wouldn't be afraid to bet that a lot of readers know nothing about it. Not surprising, because until about ten years ago very few surgeons were doing it. Even now there are not many who do the procedure.

Why?

Well, the hip is not like the knee, obviously. It is deep in the body, surrounded by big muscles and there are scary important nerves and blood vessels in front and back of the hip. The joint space is tiny compared with the huge knee joint. You need a lot of special equipment.

Enter The MRI

Before MRIs were widely done, plain x-rays, CT, bone scans, etc. did not image the hip accurately enough to tell us anything was wrong. Oh sure, we could always see arthritis and fractures, but there are many hip conditions that traditional imaging studies don't see.

Key Point. In addition, interpreting what is seen on MRI is dependent hugely on the experience of the reader. That is true even today as surgeons and radiologist frequently disagree among themselves about what the MRI images are showing.

There is beginning to be a little more agreement about what hip abnormalities the images are showing us.

What Goes Wrong?

Before better techniques and reading of MRIs and looking into hips with arthroscopes, we called these painful hips arthritis or "normal". A very partial list of frequent abnormalities now found would be:

- Build up of small bone spurs
- Tearing of gristle like tissue around the socket
- Bone chips
- Loose pieces of cartilage
- Rough spots on the socket or ball
- Cystic spaces

Who Gets This Hip Trouble?

Patients from teenage to late middle age I would say. We are not talking about the person of any age who has obvious arthritis on plain x-ray. I don't need MRI or arthroscopic surgery to diagnose most arthritis changes.

These patients are ones who have persistent hip trouble that probably have "normal" x-rays perhaps even a "normal" MRI.

Symptoms

The symptoms are highly variable and don't fit into any pattern as a rule. Some patients have gone from one doctor to another for months or years without a correct diagnosis. Sad, but it is true.

- Pain at times, sharp in the groin area
- Limping, again at times but not always
- Stiffness that comes and goes
- Feeling of catching deep in the hip
- Often relieved by rest
- Can't run
- Can sometimes hear a pop or snap

To Be Continued

Darn, I have run out of space this week and there is more to tell you. Don't worry, I won't drag it out like the "Rocky" movies. I think I can end it next time with "Hip Arthroscopic Surgery II". See you next week. Hope you learned something.

Argus Orthopaedic Zone Archive and Office Website

The office website www.orthopodsurgeon.com and the Argus Orthopaedic Zone archive are your window to the Orthopaedic world!

www.orthopodsurgeon.com contains

- The Website Library of Information
- Your Orthopaedic Connection
- Argus Orthopaedic Zone Archive

I urge you to log onto the website and check it all out. You will be amazed at all the useful information it contains.

The Argus Orthopaedic Zone archive contains the complete text of every article I have ever written for Shepherd Argus. Please check it out for interesting articles you may have missed.

I very much appreciate all of you loyal readers, patients and future patients. I am here for you in the office, in Argus Orthopaedic Zone and on the office website.

All of the information pertains to everything I treat in the office and hospital.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives. I specialize in you.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush