

Article Review:

2018 Consensus statement on exercise therapy and physical interventions (orthoses, taping and manual therapy) to treat patellofemoral pain: recommendations from the 5th International Patellofemoral Pain Research Retreat, Gold Coast, Australia, 2017

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One of the most common sources of knee pain is from patellofemoral pain and is a common condition that family physicians have to manage. Patients often report significant burden due to limitation in activity and daily tasks, hence it is imperative to have a firm grasp of the evidence behind current treatment. This past year, the 5th International Patellofemoral Research Retreat gathered in Australia to review the interventions for patellofemoral pain and published the 2018 consensus statement for patellofemoral pain treatment.

6 systematic reviews and 13 RCTs that were published since the last meeting were reviewed and used to update the 2016 consensus statement. No significant changes were made from the previous consensus statements but several new statements were added to address new modalities.

Some highlights of the consensus based recommendations are as follows

1. Exercise therapy is recommended and reduces pain in the short, medium, and long terms. It also improves function in the medium and long term.
2. Combining hip and knee exercises is superior to knee exercises alone
3. Combined interventions are recommended to reduce pain in the short and medium term. This means exercise therapy in conjunction with other therapies such as foot orthoses, patellar taping, or manual therapy
4. Foot orthoses are recommended to reduce pain in the short term
5. Electrophysical agents (ultrasound, phonophoresis, laser therapy) are not recommended
6. Patellofemoral, knee and lumbar mobilisations are not recommended
7. in isolation
8. It is uncertain whether patellar taping and bracing is helpful with pain in the short, medium, or long term.
9. It is uncertain whether acupuncture or dry needling reduces pain in the short and medium term
10. It is uncertain whether manual soft tissue techniques are beneficial in the short term

11. It is uncertain whether blood flow restriction training is superior to exercise therapy with regards to reducing pain in the short term
12. It is uncertain whether gait retraining is effective in reducing pain and improving function in the short term

Given there are many areas of uncertainty, it is important for the family physician to be aware of these treatment modalities and how they may apply to the individual seeking treatment. However, there remains a lot of questions to be answered and will require physicians to continually update themselves on the latest available evidence.

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