

CORRESPONDENCE

Perthes Disease—Current Principles of Diagnosis and Treatment

by Dr. med. Manfred Nelitz, Dr. med. Sabine Lippacher, Univ.-Prof. Dr. med. Rüdiger Krauspe, Univ.-Prof. Dr. med Heiko Reichel in volume 31–32/2009

Alternative to Crutches?

The paragraph describing conservative therapies requires an addendum. The authors recommend physiotherapy and reducing the patients' level of activity, but they completely omit diminishing load to the hips. They doubt the effect of weight-relieving orthoses and cite in support studies by Kallio et al (1) and Kallio and Ryöppy (2). Neither study, however, investigated the effects of orthoses but measured intraarticular pressures that distend the hip joint at 2.4–3.4 kPa correlating with a fraction of what hip joints are bearing when walking. The conclusions of these studies are irrelevant in terms of whether orthoses relieve weight.

How the weight relief should be delivered will need to be answered on an individual basis and in cooperation with the parents. An alternative to crutches is offered by weight-bearing orthoses, whose reputation seems to be undeservedly poor. Even if it is assumed that orthoses provide only partial weight relief, they still reduce the number of harmful changes in load and bring about an absence of symptoms from the first day. They release parents/carers from the pressure of having to slow down and supervise their children at all times, which can only be a weighty argument at a time when increasingly both parents work.

DOI: 10.3238/arztebl.2010.0062a

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In Reply:

An important cornerstone of conservative treatment of Perthes disease is to reduce the weight placed on the affected hip joint. Strict mechanical unloading of the affected hip joint is not necessary. What is important, however, is that extreme stresses are avoided, which is why we recommended low impact sports.

We recommend the use of crutches only for the short term and during the acute phase. For long term treatment, neither crutches nor weight-bearing orthoses are usually required nor are they sensible. Studies that show the positive therapeutic effects of weight-bearing orthoses are lacking. The main emphasis of conservative treatment is therefore on functional physiotherapeutic treatment.

DOI: 10.3238/arztebl.2010.0062b

REFERENCES

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Conflict of interest statement

The authors of both contributions declare that no conflict of interest exists according to the guidelines of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors.

Erratum

In the article “Physical Activity in the Prevention and Treatment of Colorectal Carcinoma” by Martin Halle and Michael H. Schoenberg (Deutsches Ärzteblatt International, 30 October 2009; issue 44), the following book chapter should have been cited as an important bibliographical source: Lücking FP, Schmid RM: Kolorektales Karzinom. In: Halle M, Schmidt-Trucksäss A, Hambrecht R, Berg A (eds.): Sporttherapie in der Medizin – Evidenzbasierte Prävention und Therapie. Stuttgart: Schattauer-Verlag 2008; 261–72.

The authors deeply regret this omission.