



# BACKGROUND

#### History of Dry Needling:

- Defined by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) as a skilled intervention that uses a thin filiform needle to penetrate the skin and stimulate underlying myofascial trigger points, muscular, and connective tissues for the management of neuromusculoskeletal pain and movement impairments. (1)
- Initially researched and developed in the 1970's and 80's based off research of Dr. Janet Travell and Dr. David Simons (myofascial trigger point injections), Dr. Chan Gunn as well as Karel Lewitt (2,3)



McAphee D, Bagwell M, Falsone S. Dry Needling: A Clinical Commentary. *IJSPT*. 2022;17(4):551-555

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#### **CURRENT RESEARCH EVIDENCE** Plantar Fasciitis / Plantar Heel Pain: 7 RCT selected for inclusion · Dry needling significantly reduced VAS scores Journal of Pain Research Dovepress compared to control groups at 1, 6 and 12 ORIGINAL RESEARCH month follow-ups Effectiveness of trigger point dry needling Incidents of adverse events was comparable for plantar heel pain: a meta-analysis of seven in dry needling and control groups randomized controlled trials Functional outcome measures were not addressed (6) Pain Medicine, 22(7), 2021, 1630-164 6 RCT selected for inclusion doi: 10.1093/pm/pnab114 doi: 10.100-0 ess Publication Date: 24 March 2021 Review Article Dry needling significantly reduced pain in short and long term, meeting the MCID for Is Dry Needling Effective for the Management of Plantar Heel Pain or VAS on average foot pain Plantar Fasciitis? An Updated Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Significant improvement in pain-related Luis Llurda-Almuzara, PT, MSc.\* Noé Labata-Lezaun, PT, MSc,\*Toni Meca-Rivera, PT,\*<sup>1</sup> Marcos J. Navarro-Santana (), PT, MSc.<sup>\*</sup> Joshua A. Cleland, PT, PhD,<sup>1</sup> César Fernández-de-las-Peñas, PT, PhD,<sup>1</sup> and Albert Pérez-Bellmunt, PT, PhD\* • disability/function, however small effect size GRADE and Risk of Bias assessment indicate overall low level of evidence (7) Allina Health 🔆

# **CURRENT RESEARCH EVIDENCE**



MDPI

Effects of Trigger Point Dry Needling for the Management of Knee Pain Syndromes: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

Youssef Rahou-El-Bachiri <sup>1</sup>, Marcos J. Navarro-Santana <sup>2,3</sup>, Guido F Gómez-Chiguano <sup>4</sup>, Joshua A Cleland <sup>3</sup>, Ibai López-de-Uralde-Villanueva <sup>2</sup>, César Fernández-de-las-Peñas <sup>6,7</sup>\*©, Ricardo Ortega-Santiago <sup>6,7</sup> and Gustavo Plaza-Manzano <sup>2,8</sup>©

- 10 RCT selected for inclusion
- Moderate effect size for dry needling reducing pain and improving related disability in the short term for patellofemoral pain but not in knee OA or postsurgery knee pain populations
- · No long-term significant difference observed
- 5 of the 6 studies specific to patellofemoral pain combined needling with exercise and manual therapy – indicating need for multimodal approach
- Overall GRADE assessment of low to moderate (8)

Shoulder Pain / Subacromial Pain Syndrome:

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#### Lateral Epicondylagia:

Original Arack Effects of trigger point dry needling on lateral epicondylalgia of musculoskeletal origin: a systematic review and meta-analysis

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CLINICAL REHABILITATION

Marcos J Navarro-Santana<sup>1,3</sup>0, Jorge Sanchez-Infante<sup>1</sup>, Guido F Gómez-Chiguano<sup>4</sup>0, Joshua A Cleland<sup>5</sup>, Ibai López-de-Uralde-Villanueva<sup>1</sup>, César Fernández-de-las-Peñas<sup>4,3</sup>0 and Gustavo Plaza-Manzano<sup>1,8</sup>

- 7 RCT selected for inclusion
- Large effect size for dry needling significantly reducing pain and related disability in short and long term as well as pain pressure threshold but only in short term when compared to control group
- Small effect size of improving strength compared to control group
- Overall GRADE and Risk of Bias assessment of low to moderate evidence (9)

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# CURRENT RESEARCH EVIDENCE

| Review<br>A Systematic Review of the Effectiveness of Dry Needling in<br>Subacromial Syndrome<br>Maria Blanco-Diza <sup>10</sup> , Rubén Ruiz-Redondo <sup>1</sup> , Isabel Escobio-Prieto <sup>2,40</sup> , Marta De la Fuente-Costa <sup>1</sup> ,<br>Manuel Albornoz-Cabello <sup>2,0</sup> and José Casaña <sup>3</sup> <sup>0</sup> | <ul> <li>Most significant effects on pain and disability measures found when dry needling is combined with standard physical therapy</li> <li>Inconsistent effect between studies regarding range of motion of the shoulder</li> <li>Application of dry needling to the infraspinatus muscle produced most significant benefits (10)</li> </ul> |
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| <text><text><section-header><section-header><section-header><section-header><section-header><section-header></section-header></section-header></section-header></section-header></section-header></section-header></text></text>   | <ul> <li>6 RCT selected for inclusion</li> <li>Small effect size for pain reduction in short<br/>term, but below MCID</li> <li>Large effect size for pain-related disability in the<br/>short and long term, at or exceeded MCID</li> <li>Overall low to moderate evidence level (11)</li> </ul>  |

# **CURRENT RESEARCH EVIDENCE**

#### Chronic Neck Pain:



Dry Needling in Physical Therapy Treatment of Chronic Neck Pain: Systematic Review Manuel Rodriguez-Huguet<sup>12-0</sup>, Maria Jesus Vinolo-Gil <sup>10</sup> and Jorge Góngora-Rodriguez<sup>20</sup>

- 11 RCT selected for inclusion
- Positive outcomes for pain, range of motion and pain-related disability in short term and 3–6-month follow-up, limited significance in long term follow-up to 1 year
- Recommended treatment range of 4-6 sessions over 2-4 weeks
- Most beneficial treatment plan target the upper trapezius and levator scapulae, is preformed bilaterally and in combination with therapeutic exercise and other manual therapy techniques (12)

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#### Dry Needling vs Corticosteroid Injection:

Sousa Filho et al. Chiopactic & Manual Therapies (2021) 29:49 https://doi.org/10.1186/s12998-021-00408-y Chiropractic & Manual Therapies

Corticosteroid injection or dry needling for musculoskeletal pain and disability? A systematic review and GRADE evidence synthesis Luis Permano Soura Filo<sup>120</sup>. Mars Mark Barbora Santor<sup>2</sup>, Gabriel Henrique Freire dos Santor<sup>2</sup> and Walder Montendo di Shina Jinkor<sup>2</sup>

• 6 RCT selected for inclusion

- Low quality evidence that there is no difference in short- or long-term pain or disability between dry needling and corticosteroid injection with greater trochanteric pain syndrome and myofascial pain
- Low quality evidence that corticosteroid injection is superior in the short term while dry needling is superior in the long term with plantar fasciitis and lateral epicondylitis (13)

## **CURRENT RESEARCH EVIDENCE**

General Musculoskeletal Conditions:



- 42 RCT selected for inclusion
- 3 subgroups
  - Dry needling vs placebo
  - Dry needling vs other therapies
- Dry needling + other therapies vs other therapies
- Low to moderate quality evidence of moderate to large effect size that dry needling was more effective treatment than no treatment, sham dry needling and other therapies at reducing pain at all follow-up time frames (from immediate to 24 weeks)
- Higher effect sizes were noted when dry needling was combined with other therapies at almost all follow-up time frames (14)

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# CURRENT RESEARCH EVIDENCE General Musculoskeletal Conditions: [RESEARCH REPORT] 12 RCT selected for inclusion Dry needling vs control/sham dry needling Immediate to 12-week effects: Immediate to 12-week effects:

- Low quality evidence suggesting moderate effect size favoring dry needling for reducing pain level
   In only 2 studies were the effect
  - In only 2 studies were the effect sizes considered clinically meaningful
- 12-to-24-week effects:
  - Moderate quality evidence suggesting small effect size favoring dry needling for reducing pain level
  - Low quality evidence suggesting small effect size favoring dry needling with functional outcome measures
- Dry needling vs other treatments
  Immediate to 12-week effects:
  - Moderate quality evidence suggesting small effect size favoring dry needling for reducing pain level (4)

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ERIC GATTIE, PT. DPT' + JOSHUA A, CLELAND, PT. PhD' + SUZANNE SNODG

The Effectiveness of Trigger Point Dry Needling for Musculoskeletal Conditions

by Physical Therapists: A Systematic

**Review and Meta-analysis** 

JOURNAL OF ORTHOPAEDIC & SPORTS PHYSICAL THERAPY | VOLUME 47 | NUMBER 3 | MARCH 2017 |



#### **CURRENT RESEARCH EVIDENCE** Recent Randomized Controlled Trials: Shoulder pain / subacromial pain syndrome Dry needling to the upper trapezius had a short term, significant and meaningful clinical difference in pain compared to sham needling, typically noted after 2 days following treatment (20) Cervicothoracic and upper rib manipulation combined with dry needling resulted in greater reduction in pain, disability and medication intake when compared to non-thrust joint mobilization, soft tissue mobilization and interferential current in patients with subacromial pain syndrome (21) Chronic neck pain / Cervicogenic headaches · Cervical and upper thoracic manipulation combined with dry needling resulted in significantly reduced pain and disability (exceeding MCID for VAS and NDI) compared to non-thrust mobilization and exercise in patients with cervicogenic headaches that was maintained at 3-month follow-up (22) Dry needling when combined with standard physical therapy only showed a small effect size difference in pain at 1 month follow-up, but not 3 or 6 month, when compared to standard physical therapy including manual therapy and therapeutic exercises in patients with chronic neck pain (23) Dry needling with manual therapy and exercise was not significantly different than sham dry needling • with manual therapy and exercise at short- or long-term follow-up in patients with chronic neck pain Both groups improved in pain level and disability measures (24) Allina Health 🐝

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# CURRENT RESEARCH EVIDENCE

#### Adverse Events:



- Prospective questionnaire study design
- 420 physical therapist participated by reporting 20,464 total dry needling treatment sessions
- Responding physical therapist would document and report adverse events
  - Minor event: Bruising/hematoma, feeling faint, nausea, headache, drowsiness, bleeding at the needling site, needling pain during treatment, and aggravation of symptoms after treatment
  - Major event: Pneumothorax, punctured organ, broken/forgotten needle, systemic effects, infections, and altered symptoms
- 36.7% of treatment sessions resulted in minor events
   Mainly bleeding, bruising and pain during treatment
- 0.1% of treatment sessions resulted in major events
  - Most common were prolonged symptom aggravation, fainting and forgotten needles
  - No pneumothorax or punctured organ reported (25)

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# **CLINICAL APPLICATIONS**

- Summary of Research Evidence:
  - Generally low to moderate evidence with variable effect size to support the use of dry needling with a variety of musculoskeletal conditions
  - · Most consistent significant finding with large effect associated with short term pain reduction
  - Increased significance of outcomes when dry needling is completed along with exercise and/or additional manual therapy interventions
  - Minor adverse events (bleeding, bruising and pain during treatment) are common but major adverse events are rare
  - · Not recommended as a first-line or stand-alone treatment approach
- Clinical Practice Recommendations:
  - Ensure patient is appropriate and no alternative manual therapy would be equally beneficial
  - Utilize as an adjunct treatment option as part of a multimodal, patient centered treatment plan
  - Patient education and communication before, during and following treatment is essential
  - Goal when selecting dry needling as an intervention:
    - Reduce pain and improve mobility
  - Improve patient tolerance and overall effectiveness of active exercise interventions

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