

EDITORIAL

THE HIP JOINT: THE NEW ORTHOPEDIC FRONTIER

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In spite of the hip being crucial as a major weight bearing joint, hip joint injuries have received little attention. The question of why is perplexing, yet several reasons emerge for this lack of attention. Hip injuries may be less common than other orthopedic injuries. In comparison to other joints, only a relatively small body of knowledge is available, with much of the information on hip injuries in case report formats. It is possible that hip pathology has always been present, but challenges exist in establishing a clear diagnosis due to poor sensitivity and specificity of orthopedic tests for intra-articular pathology. Lastly, treatment options for the hip are limited and, therefore, little incentive exists for diagnostic investigation. In the past, patients were resigned to living within the constraints of their symptoms. As methods of arthroscopy for the hip have become more and more reliable, a whole new understanding of hip disorders have been uncovered that previously went undiagnosed and, for the most part, untreated. These new pathologies have always been present, but due to our lack of understanding and diagnostic ability, the problems have largely gone unrecognized.

This thematic issue of *NAJSPT* examines some of the more recent advances that have occurred in the management of the hip in the athlete. Emphasis has been placed upon the current understanding of the pathomechanics and clinical assessment of the hip. Accurate diagnosis is essential to a successful outcome. One diagnostic challenge is that various intra-articular and extra-articular pathologies may co-exist. The authors provide information on some of the more common pathologies found about the

hip in the athlete. In addition, the latest advancements in the surgical management are also provided. In many cases, athletes may have degenerative changes that may eventually require total hip arthroplasty. This issue also includes a case report of a professional golfer who successfully underwent a total hip arthroplasty and returned to competitive golf without complications.

Where do we go from here? The reader will observe that more research needs to be performed to assess the efficacy of current rehabilitation programs. We still do not fully understand the natural history of labral tears and other hip pathology. The possibility exists that some may heal or at least become asymptomatic. As the utilization of hip arthroscopy continues to grow, so should the understanding and development of rehabilitation protocols and techniques. The mechanical disorder can often be corrected through surgery – the functional deficit must be corrected through rehabilitation. It is my hope that this issue of *NAJSPT* will begin to increase your knowledge and interest in the crucial joint – the hip.

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