Audit on treatment and recovery of ankle sprain

WY Lee

Study Objectives: The object of this study is to audit the care of ankle sprain of different severity and the functional limitations at two weeks and six weeks post injury of patients presenting to the Emergency Department of my hospital. Methods: Over a three month period, all patients presenting with acute ankle sprain were recruited at triage (index visit). Exclusion criteria were ankle injuries more than twenty-four hours old or had already received radiological evidence of fractures. A self-administered questionnaire was used to determine the severity and treatment. At second and at sixth week post index visit, three telephone interview attempts were made respectively to ask for the functional limitations and recovery using a standard questionnaire. Results: One hundred and thirty-nine candidates were recruited. Of these, 35.3% had mild, 19.6% had moderate and 15.2% had severe ankle sprain. Those with moderately severe ankle sprain have the least medical leave days. Only 48% were given more than 3 days of medical leave compared to 71% (mild group) and 76% (severe group). The treatment is otherwise similar across the three groups. Eighty-one patients (58%) and 70 patients (50%) were captured in the 2nd and 6th week telephone interviews respectively. Those patients with moderate severity fared worse with higher overall percentages in functional limitations and secondary consultations. This was more obvious in the 6th week telephone interview. Conclusion: Patients with moderate severity ankle sprain fared worse compared with patients with severe or mild ankle sprain over a six-week recovery period. This may be due to insufficient rest days given to this group of patients at initial presentation. (Hong Kong j.emerg.med. 2002;9:72-77)

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