

ESWT for the diagnosis and treatment of chronic pelvic pain and urologic disorders

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Introduction: In the early 80s of the 20th century focussed extracorporeal shockwaves (ESWT) have been used in medicine, first in urology for the destruction of kidney stones¹. Then ESWT has been used to treat orthopaedic patients with calcified structures such as shoulder tendons or heel spur². The clinical findings have shown over the years that the main effect of low to middle shockwave energy is not that of tissue destruction but the induction of specific healing processes³. Especially for the treatment of different pain conditions low energy levels of focussed shockwaves have proven to be a specific method of treatment^{4,5}.

Patients that come to see a Urologist often suffer from myofascial pain^{6,7,8,9,10}. Myofascial pain caused by Trigger points have been found to be a common cause not only of chronic pelvic pain syndrome but also of many conditions, that are related to urological symptoms eg. Interstitial cystitis, pelvic pain, sexual dysfunction and interstitial cystitis^{6,7,8,9}.

Recently a prospective randomised, double-blind study has shown focussed ESWT to be a good method to treat chronic pelvic pain and urological symptoms such as sexual dysfunction and voiding symptoms¹⁰.

In recent years there has been increased interest in the use of ESWT, not only for the treatment but also for the diagnosis, because it has been shown, that the specific small focussed energy of ESWT is able to elicit much more often the important diagnostic criteria of "referred pain" and "recognition" typical for myofascial trigger points and myofascial pain syndrome¹¹.

The positive therapeutic effects of ESWT on muscle and myofascial trigger points that have been found on empirical studies can be explained in analogy with validated reactions of ESWT in non-muscle tissue¹².

ESWT is a good method for the treatment of urologic pain and disorders¹⁰. It is an easy and efficient treatment that lacks any side-effects, and has the potential for repetition.

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