Coccygodynia
“A pain in the rear”

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What's in a name?
That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet;

Coccygodynia

coccygodynia (kok ‘si-go-din’e-a) pain in the coccyx and neighboring region. Called also coccyalgia and coccydynia.

Dorland Medical Dictionary

Description
The coccyx is a vestigial set of bones equivalent to the tail of many mammals.
It is the set of fused, tapered, rounded bones, 4-5 in number, that articulate with the sacrum.

Superior articular facet
Sacral canal
Ala
Spinous tubercles
Coccyx (tail bone)
Dorsal sacral foramina
Sacral hiatus

1 = sacral promontory, 2 = greater sciatic foramen, 3 = sacrospinous ligament, 4 = sacrotuberous ligament, 5 = lesser sciatic foramen, 6 = ischial tuberosity.

Mid-sagittal view of the greater sciatic foramen.
The greater sciatic foramen.

1 = piriformis muscle,
2 = ischial spine,
3 = obturator internus muscle,
4 = coccygeus muscle,
5 = levator ani muscles,
arrow = pudendal nerve.

Midsagittal view of the pelvis.

Relationship of the sacral plexus (4) and gluteal arteries to the piriformis muscle (1).
2 = coccygeus muscle,
3 = sacrotuberous ligament,
straight solid arrow = superior gluteal artery,
curved arrow = inferior gluteal artery,
open arrow = internal iliac artery.

Incidence

It is 5 times more common in women following direct trauma.
1% of back pain reported to physicians.

Causes

Because patients often mention a fall on the buttocks or a delivery as precipitating event, a mechanical basis for the pain is likely.

Patient dilemma

Patients with coccygodynia often report that their physicians minimize, dismiss, or belittle their symptoms.

Professional Questions

- Why would their (allopathic) physicians minimize, dismiss, or belittle their symptoms?
- Do chiropractic physicians react differently?
Patient Dilemma

Coccygodynia is often relatively severe and persistent, causing significant compromise of the patient's ability to perform or endure various activities.

Solution

Physicians who understand coccygodynia and the available treatment options can provide a great service to this otherwise neglected patient population.

Professional Question

How do chiropractic physicians evaluate and manage patients suffering with coccygodynia?

Clinical Question:

Select the conservative care that you would consider prior to surgical excision for coccygodynia:

1. NSAIDS
2. Donut cushion
3. Diathermy
4. Cryotherapy (ice)
5. Spinal manipulation
6. Coccygeal manipulation
7. Myofascial treatment
8. Radiotherapy
9. Manipulation of coccyx under anesthesia
10. Hot baths
11. Injections of anesthetics with corticosteroids
12. Psychotherapy

Lumbosacral joint dysfunction and/or sacroiliac joint fixation with pelvic obliquity

Rule out lumbar and sacral biomechanical dysfunction as a cause of pain in the tailbone.

Piriformis Myofascial Pain

Rule out piriformis trigger points or "wallet neuritis" as a cause of pain in the tailbone.
Clinical Question:
What is your diagnosis?
1. Normal sacrococcygeal joint
2. Hypomobility of sacrococcygeal joint
3. Hypermobility of sacrococcygeal joint
4. Subluxation of sacrococcygeal joint
5. Luxation of sacrococcygeal joint
6. Dislocation of sacrococcygeal joint

Clinical Questions
1. Would you consider the coccygeal alignment as a cause of coccygodynia?
2. Would you consider internal coccygeal manipulation to treat this patient if she were suffering with coccygodynia?

Anterior coccyx: internal method
The coccyx is kept in hyperextension, which stresses the sacrococcygeal and intercocygeal ligaments, stretches the levator ani muscles and reduces joint misalignments.

Clinical Questions
1. Is the coccygeal alignment abnormal?
2. Do you think the coccygeal position could be a cause of coccygodynia?
3. How would you treat this patient if she were suffering with coccygodynia?

Case Report
- 30 Y/O Female
- CC Pain in tailbone
- HPI
  - Fell onto left buttocks 8/2008
  - Tailbone pain began during 11/2008 with use of elliptical exercise equipment
  - Sitting and leaning back increased pain

Pain Description
- Pain was described as a deep, dull, achey pain that made her nauseated.
- Sitting = 9/10
- Standing and walking = 6/10
- Coughing increased the local pain
- Rising to stand could increase pain
- External palpation of coccyx increased pain
Past History

- Past history included a fall onto the buttocks 16 years ago during the summer of 1992 while attending the tenth grade. This episode of pain in the tailbone bothered her for about one year with sitting but not with standing. She described the pain sensations for the initial episode similar to the 2008 episode of pain in the tailbone area.

Physical Examination

- Patient pointed to coccygeal area as the site of pain and palpation duplicated it.
- Walking and sitting provoked pain.
- Internal rectal exam provoked the pain with palpation of the levator ani muscles.
- The coccyx was stable and properly aligned.

Treatment

- Internal rectal treatment of active trigger points was performed with trigger point pressure release (TPPR).
- Eight trigger points were treated in the levator ani,coccygeus, and obturator internus muscles.

Outcome

- Immediately following TPPR the patient was asked to sit on a hard surface and lean back and then to ambulate.
- She was able to sit with 90% reduction in pain.
- She was able to ambulate with 70% reduction in pain.

Outcome

- She was advised to return for care if she did not experience complete relief.
- One year post treatment, she was pain free and able to use the elliptical exercise equipment.

Protocol for Intrarectal Coccygeal Evaluation and Management

James J. Lehman, DC

1. Pain in tailbone area
2. History of trauma
3. Chronicity (>3 months)
4. Sitting on a firm surface is painful
5. Pain is moderate to severe (VAS 4-10/10)
Protocol for Intrarectal Coccygeal Evaluation and Management
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6. External palpation of coccyx is painful.
7. Internal palpation of coccyx is painful.
8. Painful active trigger points revealed in the levator ani and coccygeal muscles.

11. Record informed consent process.
12. Patient is advised that the procedure will be uncomfortable.

13. Advise patient that the results of a successful treatment will be evident immediately following the intervention.
14. The patient will be advised to sit on a firm surface and determine if pain severity is reduced or eliminated following treatment.

15. Patient is advised to evacuate bowel prior to treatment.
16. Patient is advised that she will be wearing a gown with the open part in the back.
17. Patient is advised that she will need to remove panties.

18. Exam room should be near a restroom.
19. Patient is gowned and placed in a lateral decubitus position with knees flexed.
20. Provide patient with tissue.
21. Sheet or large towel covers the buttocks and lower extremities.

22. Ask patient if she is ready to begin.
23. If she agrees, then prepare for the exam.
24. Place towel on exam table inferior to the buttocks of patient.
25. Place lubricant (KY jelly), examination gloves, and tissues.
26. Put glove on examining hand and apply lubricant to examining finger.
27. Examine anus and apply lubricant.
28. Advise patient that you will insert your lubricated finger.
29. Slowly insert examining finger while confirming patient is tolerating the procedure.
30. Advise patient you will stop if the pain is not tolerable.

32. If the joint is stable, the mobilization is performed three times.
33. If unstable, the reduction should be performed only once.

37. You may find one to six trigger points in the levator ani, coccygeus, and obturator internus on each side.
38. You must examine and treat bilaterally.
39. Normally, a reduced severity occurs while applying the pressure.
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43. An appropriate response to care will permit the patient to sit with a complete relief of pain or a significant reduction in severity.
44. Oftentimes, one or two treatments resolve coccygodynia.

Read, Discuss, and Present
- Read article by Jean-Yves Maigne MD, “Management of Common Coccygodynia”
- Decide appropriate conservative treatment that should be considered prior to coccygectomy
- Present your opinions

Management of Common Coccygodynia
Jean-Yves Maigne, MD

- Because patients often mention a fall on the buttocks or a delivery as precipitating event, a mechanical basis for the pain is likely. In addition, in the majority of cases, the pain occurs only in the sitting position. These factors led us to develop a protocol to document the painful coccyx with dynamic films and coccygeal discography (Maigne et al 1992, 1994).

- Dynamic films are defined as X-rays films in the lateral sitting position (the painful position) as compared with standard lateral roentgenograms. Since 1992, more than 700 patients with coccygeal pain have undergone this protocol.

The first (standard) film is taken in the lateral standing position. In order for the coccyx to be in a neutral position, it is very important for the patient to avoid sitting for the five to ten minutes preceding the X-rays examination. Otherwise, in some cases of hypermobility or luxation, there is not time enough for the coccyx to come back into the neutral position.

The correct position to X-ray the coccyx in a sitting posture. Note the foot rest.
Management of Common Coccygodynia
Jean-Yves Maigne, MD

Passive flexion is due to the direct pressure of the seat over the coccyx. In other cases, a passive extension is encountered, which is due to an increased intra-pelvic and abdominal pressure by the seat. The direction is depending on the coccygeal anatomy.

Range of motion of the coccyx is measured in degrees (angle ABC).

Flexion larger than 25-30 degrees represents hypermobility.
Larger than 25% represents luxation.

Extension larger than 15-20 degrees is also pathologic, but it is a very rare situation.

Characteristics of patients with luxation
- Body Mass Index is statistically higher.
- History of direct and violent trauma to the coccyx prior to the pain
- Acute pain while passing from the sitting to the standing position,
- More intense with sitting position

Conservative management is successful in about 90% of patients using an assortment of treatments, including nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, hot baths, ring-shaped cushions, manual therapy, massage, injections of local anaesthetic with corticosteroid, radiotherapy and psychotherapy.
Management of Common Coccygodynia
Jean-Yves Maigne, MD

Manual treatments consist in either manipulations of the coccyx or massages of the pelvic muscles (levator ani or piriformis). This is a very classic treatment of coccygeal disorders. In an open study by Wray et al., adding manipulation to injection treatment produced a 25% increase in the rate of satisfactory results.