ACUTE OVERUSE INJURY A CASE OF TENOSYNOVITIS

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The patient C.B. presented with pain, swelling and creaking on the dorsum of the right forearm.

Two weeks previously he had taken part in the 126 mile Devizes to Westminster Canoe race which, with his partner, he had won in record time under rather unfavourable weather conditions.

The day after the Easter bank-holiday he returned to work in the building trade and found that the back of his right forearm "did not feel right". During the following days he had progressive pain, swelling and creaking or grating on movement. He was able to work but not to train.

On examination he presented the classical features of Tenosynovitis crepitans of the extensor tendons on the dorsum of the right wrist with marked swelling (Figure 1).

In view of his racing commitments and in particular his competing for a place in the Olympic squad, an active regime of treatment was carried out.

The swollen inflamed area was infiltrated with 1% Xylocaine solution containing 50 mgm. of Hydrocortisone acetate and 3,000 i.u. of hyaluronidase "Hyalase". The forearm was then bound up with Elastocrepe bandage over Tubigrip and an additional Plaster-of-Paris splint provided for rest and night use. Finally he was administered 100 mgms. of Phenylbutazone after meals thrice daily (for two weeks).

For the first four days he did his normal work, after which time all swelling, pain and crepitus had subsided. He then resumed training gradually building up during the following two weeks. During the first part of that period he experienced a little discomfort, and continued to wear the forearm bandage at work.

In less than three weeks from first presentation he had raced again twice with no sign of recurrence.

Discussion.

Acute overuse syndromes tend to chronicity unless treated vigorously in the first instance. Once inflammation has persisted long enough for fibrosis to develop treatment becomes more difficult and prolonged. Tenosynovitis crepitans is notorious in this respect.

In this particular case energetic treatment amounting almost to "blunderbuss therapy" produced an almost dramatically satisfactory result.