

# HIP FACTS FROM THE LITERATURE #101

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## NO DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EDUCATION + EXERCISE VERSUS EDUCATION + SHOCKWAVE FOR PROXIMAL HAMSTRING TENDINOPATHY



### A Randomised Clinical Trial

4 x Shockwave  
+ 2 x Reviews

**VS**

6 x Physio  
Ed + Exercise

12 weeks of intervention  
Both groups were provided the same  
education by physios  
Both groups improved with no significant  
between-group differences

**Is education the key? Was it the 6 contacts with a physio? Was it just natural history? Do we need to test different interventions & groups?**

This RCT from Aidan Rich and colleagues compared 2 different interventions provided as 6 sessions with a physiotherapist over 12 weeks. Both groups were provided with detailed education about the condition and self management advice. In addition, one group was provided with a progressive exercise program, with weekly check ins and updates with their physio. The other group received 4 shockwave treatments over 4 weeks, and 2 further weekly reviews, so each group had the same number of contacts with a physio.

Interestingly, they found no differences in the primary outcome measures - global rating of change on a 7-point Likert scale and the VISA-H in either the short or longer term. Both groups improved to a clinically meaningful level by 12 weeks which was maintained through to the long term time point at 52 weeks.

### **These results raise many questions:**

- Were there factors common to both groups that mediated the effects - the education and/or the therapeutic alliance developed with the physio over 6 sessions?
- Were there factors in the exercise intervention that reduced stronger outcomes, for example, adherence was lower with exercise, exercise was unsupervised, compressive type exercises were re-introduced in the final phase? Any or none of these factors may be relevant.

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Further research is required to tease out many aspects of interventions for proximal hamstring tendinopathy and we need a trial with a no-treatment or placebo intervention, but full credit to these authors who have finally got the ball rolling with some high quality research on this condition.

For now, the authors have established 2 treatment protocols for proximal hamstring tendinopathy that have been tested under RCT conditions. Education and therapeutic alliance are likely to be a key elements. Start here, and preferably try an active intervention first - add a progressive exercise program, and you might vary elements of that protocol to see what works best with the individual.

Shockwave is usually considered a second tier intervention. If you have patients who are not progressing adequately or are not able to commit adequately to an exercise program, then there may be another option available. Just ensure it is provided together with sound educational material and support, and preferably is an adjunct to an ongoing exercise program.

Rich A, Ford J, Cook J, Hahne A. Physiotherapy Compared With Shockwave Therapy for the Treatment of Proximal Hamstring Tendinopathy: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Am J Sports Med.* 2025;53(14):3396-3407.