

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A new concept for an old pain: “Carpalgia”; Pain in the wrist☆



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KEYWORDS

Musculoskeletal pain;
Wrist;
Neologism

Abstract

Objective: The idea of this article is to propose to the general use of a new term to semiologically describe musculoskeletal wrist pain.

Findings: The use of terms with Greco-Latin roots is common in the medical field. The result is expressed in the newly coined word (neologism) “carpalgia”, defined as musculoskeletal pain in the region of the wrist.

Conclusions: The use of other terms related to musculoskeletal pain of the shoulder (omalgia), knee (gonalgia), metatarsus (metatarsalgia), spine (cervicalgia, lumbalgia), or hip (coxalgia) terms have demonstrated their importance through their applicability in different medical journals in recent years. Supported by the large number of cases that are seen by doctors, the application of the term “carpalgia” is an aid to scientific communication, as well as the publication and search for new article related to the topic. The use of this neologism will obtain favourable and reliable results on being supported by this work future. Of course, it is expected that like any process of universalisation, a review or update will involve the participation of medical societies and the members themselves for its gradual inclusion.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Dolor
musculo-esquelético;
Muñeca;
Neologismo

Un nuevo concepto para un antiguo dolor: «carpalgia», dolor en la muñeca

Resumen

Objetivo: Se pretende proponer a la comunidad científica de cirugía ortopédica, traumatología y médica en general el uso de un nuevo término para describir semiológicamente el dolor musculoesquelético de muñeca.

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Hallazgos: Es frecuente en el campo médico el uso términos de raíces grecolatinas. El resultado obtenido se expresa en el neologismo «carpalgia», definiéndose así como el dolor musculoesquelético de la región de la muñeca.

Conclusiones: El uso de otros términos relacionados con dolor musculoesquelético al nivel del hombro (omalgia), rodilla (gonalgia), metatarso (metatarsalgia), columna vertebral (cervicalgia, dorsalgia, lumbalgia) o la cadera (coxalgia) han demostrado su importancia mediante su aplicabilidad en distintas publicaciones médicas de los últimos años. Sustentados por la gran cantidad de casos que acuden a la consulta médica, la aplicación del termino carpalgia facilitará la comunicación científica. Así como la publicación y la búsqueda de nuevos trabajos relacionados con el tema. El uso de este neologismo obtendrá resultados a futuro favorables y confiables al estar sustentados por el presente trabajo. Por supuesto, es de prever que, como todo proceso de universalización, revisión o actualización involucre la participación de las sociedades médicas y del gremio mismo para su progresiva inclusión.

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Introduction

Every branch of human knowledge and science needs to create their own terminology appropriate to their communication and expression needs. The purpose of medical terminology is to express complex medical concepts and ideas in precise terms. Its purpose is also to unify criteria. Each term should have a unique meaning that is accepted by the scientific community, thus facilitating the exchange of information at an international level.¹

This terminology is therefore of great use in daily medical practice in describing semiological findings that represent a large proportion of these manifestations. In the area of traumatology and orthopaedic surgery, we can cite words such as omalgia, gonalgia, coxalgia, amongst others as examples of words used to describe painful musculoskeletal manifestations.

A great many of these currently used words are underpinned by their applicability to the high incidence of these manifestations, since they can be used practically in the medical environment and to perform searches of associated diseases. This is particularly relevant now, in the modern era, with the use of keywords on the web.

“Wrist pain” is a clinical manifestation with a high daily incidence evidenced by the number of patients seeking medical attention after occupational, everyday and/or sports accidents. However, there is no term in any Spanish or English dictionary or medical scientific publication that describes this condition: hence the aim of our paper.

Materials and method

The Spanish language is augmented using morphological-type mechanisms – also termed morphosyntactic neologisms – to form new words; these include composition, derivation and parasynthesis. Without doubt, composition is one of the language’s most important word formation processes in updating and enriching its lexicon.²

Composition is the formation of words by means of a stable combination of other words already existing in the language (or the combination of a word or base that already exists and a Greek or Latin root/affix, or even 2 Greek or Latin root/affixes, one Greek root/affix and another Latin root/affix or vice versa).³

Medical terms are generally formed by radicals (roots); this is the principal part of the term. The use of Greco-Latin roots is common in the process of forming new words, especially in the scientific and technical fields.^{1,2}

Based on this premise, a term can be formed to define musculoskeletal pain in the area of the human wrist by applying the method for composing scientific neologisms.

Results

Combining “karpós” (Greek) or “carpus” (Latin), which translates as the region of the wrist, with the Greek “algia” (pain of) results in the word “*carpalgia*” in English and Spanish, which is then defined as pain of any aetiology in the region of the wrist. It should be highlighted that this is also very vaguely described or mentioned in other languages, in some Italian texts for example. However there is no reference to “*carpalgia*” in scientific papers in either Spanish or English.

Discussion

The result achieved enables the symptoms of wrist pain to be expressed in one precise term, in more fluent, technical and scientific way. This has been demonstrated and has persisted along with the use of other words of a similar origin such as omalgia, gonalgia, cardialgia, coxalgia, and many others.

The word omalgia is documented in English and was first described at the beginning of the 19th century in a publication in the American Journal of the Medical Sciences, “Omalgia: Pain in the shoulder”.⁴ While the use of the word gonalgia was first described in 1808.⁵

Currently there are various medical articles and publications that use these terms as keywords and even in research study titles, since it makes the condition easier to express and directs the search for users. In 2013, Figueroa-Balderas performed a study to establish reduction of omalgia in laparoscopic surgery comparing ketorolac vs ketorolac and acetazolamide.⁶ Similarly, in 2014 Gu et al. carried out arthroscopic evaluations for omalgia patients undergoing clavicular hook plate fixation of distal clavicle fractures.⁷ Contreras Blasco described a case of bilateral mechanical gonalgia in a middle-aged woman in 2003.⁸ Ajili and Gharsallah present a case of gonalgia revealing a Burkitt lymphoma⁹; Huard performed a study on posture and chronic gonalgia in the elderly.¹⁰ Furthermore, Lamers describes transient osteoporosis of the hip as a rare cause of coxalgia in a publication in 2015.¹¹

Wrist pain is part of a broad spectrum of very common disorders that range from sprains to carpal tunnel syndrome, and arthritis or arthrosis of the wrist. With the advent of computers and various devices, an increase in its frequency is predictable.

The use of the term carpalgia will thus facilitate the search for disorders related to wrist pain, since it is a keyword in various clinical articles, updates, treatment guidelines and protocols, via the major, relevant web indices and portals for current medical use.

The Board of the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*¹² (Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy) establishes as a fundamental requirement for the inclusion of words and meanings that their current use should be sufficiently documented in texts, preferably by prestigious authors, and that they should have been in use for at least 6 or 7 years; since otherwise they might only be of transient use.

The objective of this paper, therefore, is simply to inform the scientific community of orthopaedics, traumatology and general medicine of the new, scientifically coined term for very common and well-described musculoskeletal pain symptoms, the use of which can be justified in daily consultations and medical publications.

Finally, the inclusion of the word in the field of orthopaedic surgery and traumatology will be simply facilitated as new studies appear on the subject. This paper serves as a driver for a new concept for an ancient, often described pain.

Level of evidence

Level of evidence V.

Ethical disclosures

Protection of people and animals. The authors declare that no experiments were performed on humans or animals for this study.

Confidentiality of data. The authors declare that no patient data appear in this article.

Right to privacy and informed consent. The authors declare that no patient data appear in this article.

Conflict of interests

The authors have no conflict of interests to declare.

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