

Are the non-weight bearing guidelines for the after treatment of calcaneal fractures still decisive? A Dutch survey among orthopaedic and trauma surgeons

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Introduction

Currently, non-weightbearing for 8–12wks is advised after surgically treated displaced intra-articular calcaneal fractures. The purpose was to investigate the current pre-, peri- and post-operative practices among Dutch surgeons. It aims to analyze whether surgeons comply to the guidelines which decision criteria were used for weightbearing.

Method

A survey was distributed among Dutch trauma and orthopaedic surgeons to determine the most common practices in postoperative weightbearing in patients with DIACFs.

Results

75 surgeons responded to the survey. 33% adhered to the AO guidelines. 4% strictly followed non-weightbearing guidelines, while 96% interpret the AO guidelines or their local protocol freely, in any frequency. When respondents tended to deviate from the AO guidelines or local protocol, a good patients' compliance to therapy was expected. 83% of the respondents started weightbearing based on reported patient complaints. 87% did not see any relation between early weightbearing and complications.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that there is limited consensus on the rehabilitation for DIACFs. Moreover, it shows that most surgeons are inclined to interpret the current (AO) guideline or their own local protocol freely. New guidelines, supported with well-founded literature, could help surgeons in a more appropriate daily practice in weightbearing for the rehabilitation of calcaneal fractures.