

People with painful frozen shoulder may place undue faith in the benefits of a corticosteroid injection. In-depth screening, including attitudes & beliefs must be a part of the shared decision-making process

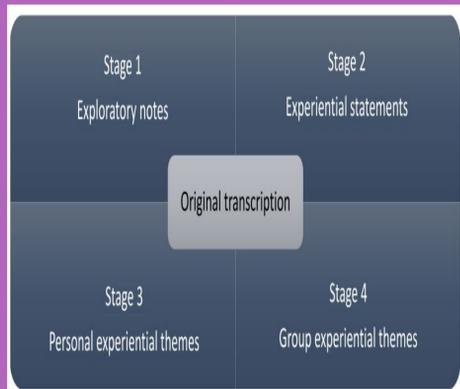
Background: Frozen shoulder is a disabling condition characterised by severe pain and loss of shoulder movement and may affect up to 5% of the population. Qualitative research documents debilitating pain and how treatment to reduce pain is a priority for people diagnosed with frozen shoulder. Corticosteroid injections are a principal treatment to reduce the pain of frozen shoulder, however little is known about the patient experience around injection therapy.

Purpose

This study aimed to address the gap in knowledge by exploring the lived experience of people with frozen shoulder who have undergone an injection

Methods

- A qualitative study using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA)
- One-to-one, semi-structured interviews carried out between Nov 21 to June 22.
- 7 participants with frozen shoulder
- All participants had received a corticosteroid injection as part of their management
- A purposive sample of participants were interviewed via MS Teams™ due to Covid-19 restrictions
- Data was analysed in accordance with IPA methods (see below)



Acknowledgements

Ethical approval - South Central Oxford C Regional Ethics Committee, Ref. 20/SC/0278 & Health Research Authority approval.

Results

3 main themes

The dilemma surrounding injections

“I had 100% faith in it. Or just probably in myself I want to believe that. And didn’t question it” ‘BB’

‘But in terms of the weigh-up the potential benefits was, uh was stronger than my concerns about risks. Here are the risks. I want the injection [laughs]’ ‘JC’

‘He explained it all, but at the end of the day, I didn’t really care about the risk, I just wanted it done and that was it. To be honest here’ ‘DF’

‘I would have been happy to have had the injection anyhow because the level of pain I was in and it just felt like just give her the injections right away like why, why mess around?’ ‘VA’

The challenges of understanding the causes of frozen shoulder

“This feels like an old age condition. This feels like a bit of you is seizing up. And you’re just in that decline (pause) towards the grave, she said cheerfully [laughs]” ‘JC’

‘I look in the mirror and I just see I just see an old lady. I just see all this saggy arm, fat and cellulite my stomach’s all bloated’ ‘JC’

“I felt, oh gosh well I have to live like that for the rest of my life now” ‘NS’

“At the time I used to play tennisso I first thought that I’d torn a muscle or something in my arm” ‘DF’.

“Many, many years ago, I was in a car accident. This part of my arm, I hurt it, so every now and again I had to get aches in it. So, I thought it was something to do with that” ‘BB’

The impact on self and others

“You can have this disability that it isn’t, you know, isn’t visible to someone else, but it feels like you’re disabled and nobody getting that” ‘VA’

‘I used to be....a very outgoing person....I’ve swung around the whole opposite way, and I don’t want to be around crowds. I can’t bear to be around people that I don’t know, I’m comfortable with my small group of people” ‘BB’.

‘It had a massive impact on everyone around me.....if she’d gone out and I was getting ready for a meeting....then I’d have to call her to come back, and I just felt awful...cause this poor kid’s been locked away at home for like over a year and....she’s finally got freedom to go.....you know, like she can’t be 100% free” ‘VA’.

Discussion

Participants conveyed a **strong desire** in seeking a corticosteroid injection whilst seemingly dismissing the risks

Participants felt frozen shoulder was inextricably **linked with age and ageing**

The impact on others is driven by a sense of the **unfamiliar nature of illness** and it is incumbent on healthcare professionals to seek opportunities to explore the individual’s beliefs

A novel concept was illuminated as frozen shoulder seemed inextricably linked with the ageing process, which **negatively impacted body-image**.

Future research

Should explore aspects of the clinical, physiological and psychological outcomes of corticosteroid injections for frozen shoulder to inform shared decision making.

References

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