



The Role of Viscoelastic and Psychosocial Factors in Upper Trapezius Pain in Individuals with Chronic Neck Pain

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Objective

To explore the relationship between upper trapezius muscle pain thresholds and viscoelastic properties (oscillation frequency, mechanical stress relaxation time, dynamic stiffness, logarithmic decrement-elasticity, and relaxation-creep ratio) and psychosocial factors (stress and depression) in individuals with chronic neck pain.

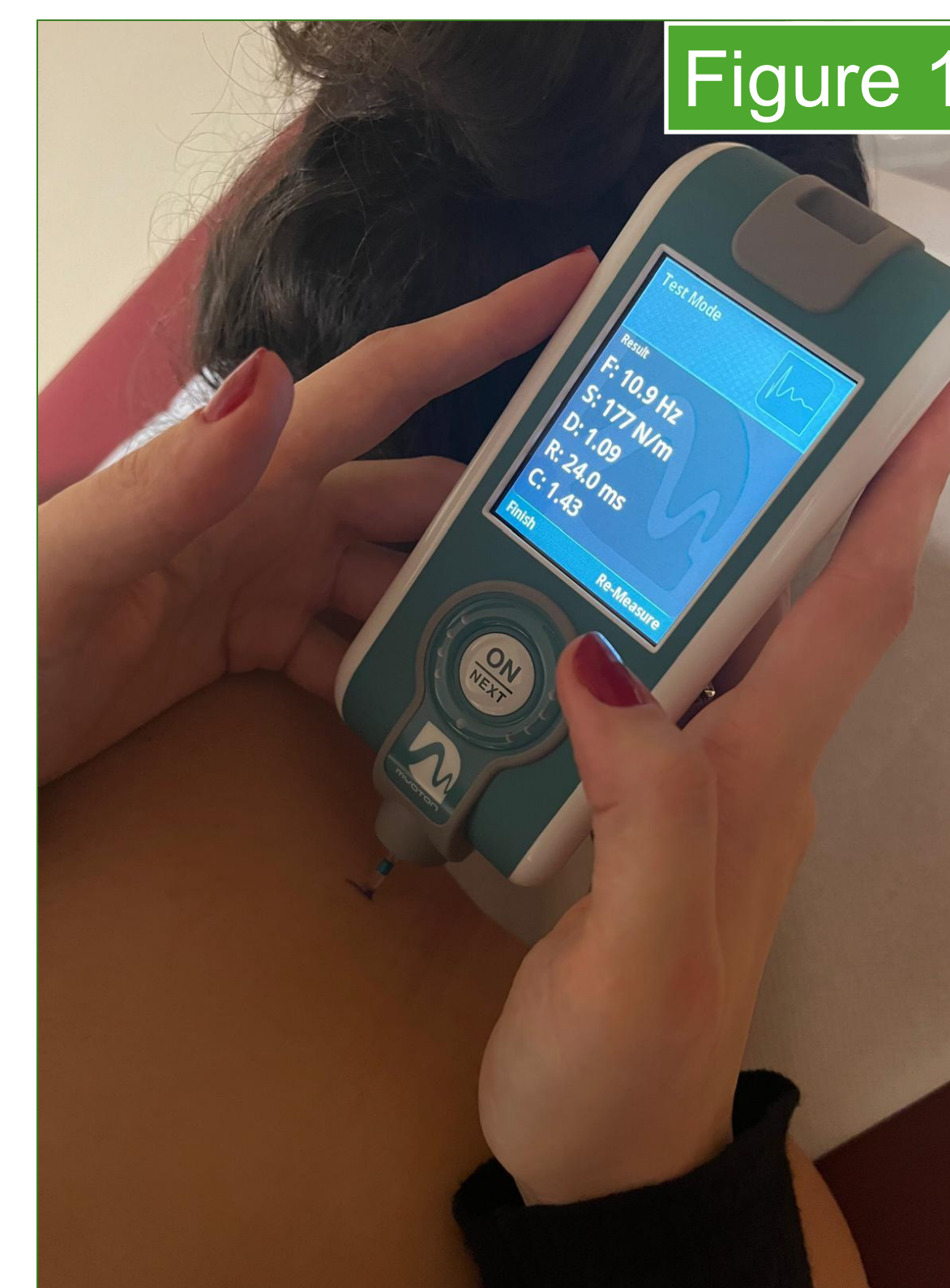


Figure 1: Measuring of muscle mechanic properties in upper portion of the Trapezius muscle by hand-held MyotonPRO device (Myoton Ltd, Estonia).



Figure 2: The hand-held MyotonPRO device (Myoton Ltd, Estonia).

Results

- Logarithmic decrement-elasticity was significantly associated with pain threshold ($p = 0.012$, $\beta = 1.731$).
- The participants had a mean Neck Disability Index (NDI) score of 25.89 ± 8.32 , indicating a moderate level of neck-related disability.
- Higher perceived stress ($p = 0.023$, $\beta = 1.001$) and depression ($p = 0.037$, $\beta = 0.646$) correlated with lower pain thresholds.
- Other viscoelastic parameters showed no significant associations ($p > 0.05$).

Methods

Participants:

27 individuals with chronic neck pain (mean age = 23.74 ± 2.65 years, BMI = 23.21 ± 3.66).

Assessment Tools:

- Neck Disability Index is used as a criteria for chronic neck pain.
- Pain threshold measured on the painful side of the upper trapezius.
- Independent variables: Cranio-cervical angle, Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), and myometric measurements assessed bilaterally.
- Multiple linear regression model used to identify pain threshold predictors.

Conclusion

Elastic properties of the upper trapezius and psychosocial factors like stress and depression play a significant role in pain perception in individuals with chronic neck pain.

These findings highlight the importance of a biopsychosocial approach in musculoskeletal pain management and emphasize integrating both mechanical and psychological assessments for better treatment outcomes.