

Charcot neuroarthropathy of the foot and ankle: a review.

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Author information

Abstract

Charcot neuroarthropathy is a limb-threatening, destructive process that occurs in patients with neuropathy associated with medical diseases such as diabetes mellitus. Clinicians' treating diabetic patients should be vigilant in recognizing the early signs of acute Charcot neuroarthropathy, such as pain, warmth, edema, or pathologic fracture in a neuropathic foot. Early detection and prompt treatment can prevent joint and bone destruction, which, if untreated, can lead to morbidity and high-level amputation. A high degree of suspicion is necessary. Once the early signs have been detected, prompt immobilization and offloading are important. Treatment should be determined on an individual basis, and it must be determined whether a patient can be treated conservatively or will require surgical intervention when entering the chronic phase. If diagnosed early, medical and conservative measures only will be required. Surgery is indicated for patients with severe or unstable deformities that, if untreated, will result in major amputations. A team approach that includes a foot and ankle surgeon, a diabetologist, a physiotherapist, a medical social councilor, and, most importantly, the patient and immediate family members is vital for successful management of this serious condition.

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KEYWORDS:

3; Charcot's foot deformity; amputation; bisphosphonate; diabetic neuroarthropathy; offloading; osteomyelitis

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