

Introduction

Many years ago, physical therapists and physicians treated the painful shoulder of a member of the SG Flensburg-Handewitt (1st National Handball League). The player complained of pain on exertion only during the match – and this had been going on for several weeks. Extensive diagnostics revealed functional impingement of the shoulder and no structural lesion. The reason was over-exertion of the shoulder resulting from 60-80,000 overhead throws annually. What possibilities exist to treat this player during the competition?

The player returned to Flensburg from a handball competition abroad with a colorful tape bandage on his shoulder. It had been applied by his physical therapist. He reported that his pain levels decreased more than 50% during the match! We became curious and also sought to apply such a tape before his next competition and were surprised that we had no success in achieving pain relief. This despite the fact that all members of the medical team were experienced in applying the classical Leukotape. We requested information about the details of this treatment modality from the foreign physical therapist and realized that a new medical concept was at work behind the taping. It was more than “just taping something on the

skin.” It was a new material with new application techniques based on decades of experience in Asia in particular. Colleagues attending to world games and Olympics also reported incredible effects of this elastic tape.

How does the tape work? What does its effectiveness depend on?

After many years’ experience with this tape with colleagues at all levels of sport, from physical therapists at the local level to the national levels, and in cooperation with BSN medical, a tape concept was developed which, based on the origins of this taping-as-pain-relief idea, has established itself as Leukotape K.

This tape shouldn’t be postulated as a wonder-tape and should not replace the necessary therapeutic measures for a given disorder. Rather, it should be employed in conformity with indications and pathology. It should influence pain conditions, reduce swelling and support muscle function. No tape, no doctor and no therapist can be smarter than the body itself. This tape supports endogenous body processes.

Proper taping requires knowledge of anatomy, physiology and the pathology of connective tissue. Good diag-

nostic capabilities are essential. Success of taping is determined by the person applying the tape, with her diagnostics and indications.

An example:

If a shoulder is hurting because of a subacromial bone spur, even a properly applied tape bandage will be ineffectual, because the tape has no effect on the bony process. Other therapeutic measures are required here. Lax use of these tape techniques leads to ineffective taping.

At present, there have been more than 200 tape applications. In this book we will present the most common and most important tape application methods which have proven themselves in our daily practice.

Tape application cannot adapt to the complex pathology in cases of injury or disease. It is and remains an unspecific therapeutic method and cannot replace the hand of the therapist, but only augment it. There is no single method of taping, nor a “golden taping standard.” The etiologies and pathologies of various individual disorders are much too complex and diverse. Tape application can have many positive effects on the organism. In part, these effects can be explained on the

basis of plausibility, but a logical reason explaining the improvement is often lacking. Nevertheless, even in this age of evidence-based medicine, this fact shouldn't stop us from using this method when the proper indication exists.

The many variants and modifications of the individual tape application methods allow individualized application for diverse disorders.

Although there have been only few randomized controlled trials, taping

has proven itself in our daily practice. Questions about the color choices or muscle tone after tape application, however, have yet to result in definite answers. Essential – independent of color choice or muscle tone – is the critical application of the tape material with correctly learned procedure.

The tape book is addressed to all persons engaged in medical practice seeking to treat pain conditions in their patients and athletes and also expand their therapeutic and preventive spectrum.

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