Localization of Referred Pain in Patients with Craneocervical Muscles Trigger Points

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ABSTRACT: The pain for miofascial point triggers it can refer to distant territories. Was carried out a retrospective descriptive study of the referred pain presence starting from trigger miofascial points located in masseter, temporalis, trapeze and sternocleidomastoid (SCM) muscles in 50 patients. The masseter was the muscle that presented pain referred with more frequency (n=32; 64%), followed by the temporalis (n=18; 36%), then the SCM (n=17; 34%) and that of smaller frequency was the trapeze (n=2; 4%). The presence of two cases of contralateral reference of the masseter is commented and some mechanisms that explain these situations, described in the literature, they are discussed.

KEY WORDS: trigger points, miofascial pain, referred pain, muscle pain.

INTRODUCTION

The trigger points are areas of hypersensitivity in skeletal muscles, clinically appear as strained bands that produce pain when applied pressure on them and can be found in adults or children (Simons, 1990; Gerwin, 1994; Fine, 1987).

The miofascial trigger points can occur in any striated muscle and its evaluation and diagnosis is controversial (McNulty et al., 1994; Gerwin & Duranleau, 1997), however, the clinical evaluation of the strained band through digital pressure appears how the most validated for the identification of trigger points (Delaney & McKee, 1993; Gerwin et al., 1997; Sciotti et al., 2001).

The pressure on strained bands can cause pain in the area where it is or refer pain to other territory (Hong, 1996), usually being the cause of this patient consultation pain.

The miofascial trigger points in present cranio cervical muscles can be found assets or latent condition and referred pain can be perceived in muscles, joints, dental, skin, mucous and membranes structures, usually ipsilaterals (Abu-Bakra & Jones, 2001; Capuano et al., 1984; Wright, 2000).

The projection areas of referred pain from muscles in the cranio cervical region have been described in the American population (Simons et al., 1992), however there are no studies indicating that such descriptions are valid for the Brazilian population.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the areas of localization of referred pain from miofascial trigger points in the masseter, temporal, trapeze and sternocleidomastoid muscle.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

A descriptive retrospectively study was conducted, based on records of the medical records of patients seen during the years 2006 and 2007 in the temporomandibular dysfunction clinic Postgraduate
Centre of the Universidad São Leopoldo Mandic, Campinas, Brazil.

Were included in this study the records of patients who showed signs and symptoms of TMD for more than six months with the presence of active trigger points, evaluated according to the questionnaire of the Academy of orofacial pain and through the Research Diagnostic Criteria for Temporomandibular disorders (RDC / TMD), whose adaptation and validation has been previously reported (Pereira et al., 2004). There were sheets patients with neurological disorders or subjected to pharmacological medication.

We analyzed 50 records of patients who met the selection criteria, 43 women and 7 men, brazilians, aged between 8 and 70 years, with an average of 39 years old (SD 15.5).

We analyzed the story of the presence of pain reported by trigger point, rated by digital palpation of the masseter, temporal, trapeze and sternocleidomastoid muscle on the left side and saw the region or anatomical structure where the pain was projected.

**RESULTS**

Of the 50 selected cases, the masseter muscle was submitted referred pain more frequently (n = 32; 64%), followed by temporal muscle (n = 18; 36%), then the sternocleidomastoid muscle (n = 17; 34%) and the lowest frequency was the trapeze muscle (n = 2; 4%).

A full detail of the areas concerned pain and the frequency with which they were presented from miofascial trigger points in the masseter, temporal, trapeze and sternocleidomastoid muscle found in Table I.

**DISCUSSION**

The pain from miofascial trigger points is a common symptom in patients with temporomandibular dysfunction (Han & Harrison, 1997) is more prevalent in the 4 th decade of life (Fricton et al., 1985).

This study evaluated records of prevalent cases of a heterogeneous group of patients who were diagnosed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region / Muscle</th>
<th>Masseter</th>
<th>Temporal</th>
<th>Trapeze</th>
<th>Sternocleidomastoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submandibular region</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parotid region</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frontal region</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masseteric region</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inferior eyelid</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auricular</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zygomatic arch</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genian region</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lateral cervical</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contralateral masseter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sternocleidomastoid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mastoid</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper cervical posterior</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coger posterior cervical</td>
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</table>
of pain trigger point that was submitted as referred pain. The limited number of registration of men and high dispersion of the age of the sample hamper the statistical comparison of these data with those reported in the literature. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the distribution of areas of pain from miofascials trigger points reproduced as described in classical studies for the American population (Simons et al.).

The referred pain, or also called atypical, in the territory of the trigeminal system can be explained by the high nociceptive convergence of primary afferent neurons are on the spinal trigeminal nucleus, they stem from different territories, not only innervated by the trigeminal, and by these projections they generated different categories of clinical interest as referred pain and reflexes nociceptive (Sessle et al., 1986; Piovesan et al., 2001).

A special situation is the discovery of two cases in which the pain for a trigger point located in the left masseter muscle referred pain in the right masseter muscle, even when there is little reporting of cases of reference contralateral pain, there are grounds to believe that to spinal trigeminal nucleus level, reticular substance of the brainstem or of the ventroposteromedial thalamic nucleus the interneurons can generate alternative mechanisms of conduction across the tracks of pain (Mumford & Newton, 1974; Kemler et al., 2000; Mailis-Gagnon & Bennett, 2004).

For the clinician generally, to be carried out by the differential diagnosis, is very useful know the areas of reference in the pain, there is every reason conducting clinical cross studies to analyze the prevalence of referred pain in the muscles of the cranio cervical region and sites where it is located more frequently, however this information must be evaluated considering atypical driving mechanisms of pain as discussed in this study.


RESUMEN: El dolor por punto gatillo miofascial puede referirse a territorios distantes. Se realizó un estudio descriptivo retrospectivo de la presencia de dolor referido a partir de puntos gatillo miofascial ubicados en los músculos masétero, temporal, trapecio y esternocleidomastoideo (ECM) en 50 pacientes. El masátero fue el músculo que presentó dolor referido con mayor frecuencia (n=32; 64%), seguido del temporal (n=18; 36%), luego el esternocleidomastoideio (n=17; 34%) y el de menor frecuencia fue el trapecio (n=2; 4%). La presencia de dos casos de referencia contralateral del masátero es comentada y algunos mecanismos que explican estas situaciones, descritos en la literatura, son discutidos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Punto gatillo, dolor miofascial, dolor referido dolor muscular.

REFERENCIAS


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