

WALANT: AN ALTERNATIVE FOR POSTERIOR TIBIALIS TENDON REPAIR DURING PANDEMIC

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Introduction: Wide-awake local anaesthesia no tourniquet (WALANT) technique has been established as safe and reliable in hand surgeries, but its use in lower limb surgeries remains limited. We report the first case of posterior tibialis tendon repair under WALANT.

Discussion: A 68 year-old female presented with 2 week history of left ankle pain, primarily on plantarflexion. Magnetic resonance imaging showed posterior tibialis (PT) tendon tear at the navicular. Due to limited availability of elective surgery lists during the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, she opted to undergo posterior tibialis tendon repair under WALANT. 20 millilitres of 1% lidocaine with adrenaline (1:200 000) buffered with 0.84% of sodium bicarbonate was infiltrated over ankle region of interest until soft tissue tumescent. Incision made posterior to medial malleolus, PT tear identified, and repair done with anchor suture. The operation took 1.5 hours, including time taken for anaesthesia to achieve maximal effect. Patient remained comfortable, bleeding minimal and operating field unobscured. Her pain score ranged from 0-3 post-operatively without opioids, and she was discharged well 2nd day post-operation. This case demonstrated WALANT technique is replicable in elective foot and ankle surgeries, including major tendon repair involving osseous fixation. Her low pain score can be attributed to the sustained effect of local anaesthesia, and is consistent with multimodal approach of administering analgesia to reduce reliance on opioids. Haemostatic effect of WALANT enables preservation of optimum visibility in the operating field, while avoiding the use of a tourniquet and its possible complications. This case highlights relevance of WALANT in our current limited elective surgery setting, as the surgeon can perform the operation without an anaesthetist to perform general anaesthesia or regional block.

Conclusion: Posterior tibialis tendon repair can be performed successfully under WALANT. WALANT is a viable option not just in upper limb surgeries, but also in foot and ankle surgeries.