A CONSERVATIVE APPROACH USING INSTRUMENT-ASSISTED SOFT TISSUE MOBILIZATION FOR THE TREATMENT OF BILATERAL PLANTAR FASCIITIS: A CASE SERIES

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**Background & Purpose:** Plantar fasciitis is a common overuse injury that can lead to a significant loss of function. Instrument-assisted soft tissue mobilization (ISTM) is a non-invasive, manual therapy technique utilized for the treatment of soft tissue dysfunction that has been found to stimulate healing and tissue reorganization. The purpose of this case series is to describe outcomes in patients with bilateral plantar fasciitis who were treated using ISTM. **Case Description:** Three patients presented with functional limitations directly related to bilateral plantar fasciitis. Each patient was evaluated and received the same treatment regimen consisting of a warm-up, ISTM to the foot and calf, strengthening, stretching, and ice massage. Outcomes were assessed using the numeric pain rating scale (NPRS), the Lower Extremity Functional Scale (LEFS), and physical measurements related to the foot and ankle. **Outcomes:** After an average of 8 sessions in a 4-week period, all patients demonstrated a mean decrease in pain of 47%, reaching a clinically meaningful change. The mean LEFS improvement was 11.2%. All three subjects demonstrated an increase in great toe extension, dorsiflexion, and plantarflexion. All subjects reported returning to previous levels of recreational activities. **Conclusions:** The results of this case study demonstrate the potential effectiveness of ISTM as a manual therapy approach for the efficient treatment of bilateral plantar fasciitis in combination with exercise. Future directions for research include the continuation of the current case series with the goal of developing a randomized clinical trial.