

**MANAGEMENT OF
TRAUMATIC DISORDERS OF THE KNEE
IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

**An Essay Submitted For
Partial Fulfillment of Master Degree
In Orthopaedic Surgery**

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CONTENTS

• Introduction and Aim of the Study	1
• Anatomy of the Knee Joint	4
• Biomechanics of the Knee Joint	17
• Classification and Clinical Presentation	23
○ Fractures and Dislocations	23
○ Ligament Injuries	36
○ Meniscal Injuries	39
○ Overuse Injuries	42
○ Osteochondritis Dissecans	44
• Diagnostic Modalities	46
• Treatment	65
• Complications	95
• Summary and Conclusion	104
• References	107
• Arabic Summary	

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACL	.....	Anterior Cruciate Ligament
AP	.....	Anteroposterior
CT	.....	Computed Tomography
JOCD	.....	Juvenile Osteochondritis Dissecans
LCL	.....	Lateral Collateral Ligament
MCL	.....	Medial Collateral Ligament
MFLs	.....	Meniscomfemoral Ligaments
MPFL	.....	Medial Patellofemoral Ligament
MRI	.....	Magnetic Resonance Imaging
NSAIDs	.....	Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs
OCD	.....	Osteochondritis Dissecans
OSD	.....	Osgood-Schlatter Disease
PCL	.....	Posterior Cruciate Ligament
PFJRF	.....	Patellofemoral Joint Reaction Force
Q-angle	.....	Quadriceps Angle
SLJD	.....	Sinding-Larsen-Johansson Disease

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Anterior aspect of the knee.	4
2. Posterior aspect of the knee.	5
3. Medial aspect of the knee.	9
4. Lateral aspect of the knee.	10
5. Top view of the tibial plateau.	11
6. Synovial folds.	13
7. The arterial anastomosis around the knee joint.	15
8. Proximal tibiofibular joint.	16
9. Patellofemoral contact areas.	21
10. Q-Angle.	22
11. Salter-Harris classification for fractures of the distal femoral epiphysis.	23
12. Salter-Harris classification for fractures of the proximal tibial epiphysis.	25
13. Ogden modification of Watson-Jones classification for tibial tubercle fractures.	28
14. Meyers and McKeever Classification for tibial spine fractures.	29
15. Types of Patellar fractures.	30
16. Osteochondral fractures.	32
17. Classification of proximal tibiofibular dislocations.	35
18. Medial and Lateral collateral ligaments injuries.	37
19. Types of Meniscal tears.	39

20. Radiographs show distal femoral physeal fractures.	46
21. Stress radiograph reveals separation of the distal femoral epiphysis.	47
22. Sagittal T2-weighted MRI reveals a nondisplaced Salter-Harris type IV fracture of the proximal tibia.	48
23. Radiographs show tibial tubercle fractures.	49
24. Radiographs show tibial spine fractures.	50
25. Sleeve fracture of the patella.	51
26. Radiographs show osteochondral fractures.	52
27. Stress radiographs show medial and lateral collateral ligament injuries.	54
28. Sagittal T2-weighted MRI show ACL tear.	55
29. Sagittal proton-density-weighted MRI show meniscal tear and discoid lateral meniscus.	56
30. Lateral radiograph shows extreme example of Osgood-Schlatter disease.	58
31. Radiographs show patellar morphology in Sinding-Larsen-Johansson disease.	59
32. Arthroscopic views show large medial patellar plica.	60
33. Anatomic classification of knee OCD based on lesion location on anteroposterior and lateral radiographs.	61
34. AP radiograph, and coronal MRI of a stage 2; juvenile OCD lesion of the medial femoral condyle.	62
35. Lateral radiograph, and sagittal MRI of a stage 3; juvenile OCD lesion of the medial femoral condyle.	62
36. Radiographs show fixation methods for distal femoral physeal fractures.	66

37. Radiographs show fixation of Salter-Harris type II separation of the proximal tibial epiphysis.	67
38. Radiographs show fixation of comminuted displaced tibial tuberosity avulsion.	69
39. Radiographs show fixation of type III tibial eminence fracture.	71
40. Radiographs show fixation of displaced transverse fracture of the patella.	72
41. ACL reconstruction techniques.	78
42. Physeal sparing ACL reconstruction technique using tibial and femoral epiphyseal tunnels.	78
43. Combined intra-articular and extra-articular physeal sparing ACL reconstruction technique.	79
44. Arthroscopic treatment of meniscal tears.	83
45. Nonoperative treatment for OCD.	90
46. Radiographs show fixation of OCD lesion with multiple Kirschner wires.	92
47. Radiographs show fixation of OCD lesion with Herbert screw.	93
48. Treatment of chronic patellar subluxation or dislocation.	101

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. MRI classification of JOCD.	61
2. Bone scan classification of JOCD lesions.	63
3. Arthroscopic classification of osteochondritis dissecans.	64
4. Nonoperative treatment for ACL injuries.	76

INTRODUCTION AND AIM OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

During the past 20 years, there has been a progressive increase in the number of young people participating in organized sports. With the increase in sports participation, more young athletes are presenting for diagnosis and treatment of musculoskeletal injuries. In pediatric athletes, the knee is the most frequent site of sports-related injury.¹

Traumatic forces applied to the immature knee result in fracture patterns different from those in adults. The relative abundance of cartilage in the knee of the growing child may make the diagnosis of certain injuries more challenging. If plain radiographs fail to reveal a fracture, a stress radiograph, computed tomography scan, or magnetic resonance imaging study may help to establish the diagnosis. Certain fractures, such as hyperextension injuries to the distal femoral or proximal tibial epiphysis, or displaced tibial tuberosity fractures, may be especially susceptible to neurovascular problems.²

Knee ligament injuries in children were once believed to be extremely rare. Before the 1980s, it was thought that complete ligament disruption in children occurred only after growth plate closure, because injury to the physis and long bones tended to occur prior to ligament damage. Several biomechanical studies have also shown the ligaments to be generally stronger than the growth plate. More recently, it has become apparent that ligamentous injury can occur in the pediatric population. In addition, multiple recent articles have documented the incidence of anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries in children, and a smaller but substantial number of articles have discussed the occurrence of posterior cruciate ligament (PCL) injuries in skeletally immature patients. Studies documenting injuries to the collateral ligaments and their treatment in children have also been published.³

Meniscal injuries to Children and adolescents were previously, considered to be extremely rare and were said to not occur in

menisci of normal shape. Meniscal injury in patients younger than 9 years of age is still quite rare in morphologically normal menisci. However, meniscal tears in previously normal menisci are seen with increasing frequency in children older than 9 years.⁴

In addition to the common acute injuries that occur about the knee, such as patellar dislocation and ligamentous and meniscal damage, sports-related musculoskeletal injuries caused by overuse are seen frequently. Overuse injury results from unresolved, submaximal stress in previously normal tissues. Normal physiologic adaptation occurs in response to use, and reasonable amounts of stress are essential for normal connective tissue function. However, when this system is overwhelmed and an adequate time frame for stress resolution is not provided, overuse injuries occur.⁵

Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD) is a relatively common cause of knee pain and dysfunction in children and adolescents.⁶ Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD) of the knee is a condition in which a fragment of bone and its overlying articular cartilage have become separated from the underlying bone. The etiology of OCD is controversial and remains unclear. Theories include ischemia, repetitive microtrauma, familial predisposition, and accessory centers of ossification. Of these, repetitive microtrauma, seems to be the most possible cause.⁷

The physical examination, imaging studies, and treatment options carry different implications for children than for adults. The orthopaedic surgeon must understand these differences and apply them in his or her clinical practice.⁸

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to delineate different traumatic knee disorders that affect children and adolescents, and to clarify diagnostic methods and treatment options for each of them.

ANATOMY
OF THE KNEE JOINT