



## **TITLE: Management of septic arthritis of the wrist in modern medicine**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Introduction:** Historical management of wrist septic arthritis (SA) has been to perform an open or arthroscopic washout of the joint. However, recent research has suggested that repeated needle aspiration of joint till dry along with antibiotic therapy can be an effective way to treat septic arthritis of the wrist. Our study aimed to analyse patient management in our centre and identify doctors' knowledge and awareness of current evidence.

**Methods:** A single-study retrospective analysis of patients with suspected septic arthritis (SA) of wrist was carried out from August 2020 to August 2022. A survey of senior doctors within the department was carried out to evaluate their opinion. Review of available literature exploring management options for septic arthritis of the wrist specifically was done by searching MEDLINE, Embase, Web of Science, and CENTRAL.

**Results:** 59 patients were included; 4 had a confirmed wrist SA with a microbiological diagnosis. All 4 (100%) patients underwent an open joint washout. No complications or recurrence was noted. Survey of 7 consultant Orthopaedic surgeons involved in decision-making process showed 57% favoured needle aspiration vs 43% recommended open washout due to familiarity of technique.

A thorough literature search found no studies conducted to assess the role of needle aspiration in the treatment of SA of the wrist; however 3 review articles were identified where one concluded superiority of needle aspiration over open or arthroscopic washout, while the other two showed no significant difference between the three modalities.

**Conclusion:** This study shows that despite novel ideas, open joint washout still acts as the commonest management strategy for SA of wrist. While repeated aspiration can be a promising mode of treatment for SA of wrist, there has not been significant evidence to drive a change in this management. There is a pressing need for studies consisting of high-quality level I data focusing specifically on the wrist joint to guide clinical recommendations and joint decision making.



3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference on  
**ORTHOPEDICS, RHEUMATOLOGY AND MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS**  
November 27-28, 2023 | Dubai, UAE

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**Mode of Presentation:** Oral.

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