



Dalhousie
University

How many Trigger Fingers Get Better if you Do Not Operate on them?

Don Lalonde MD, Jan Lalonde RN

Introduction

- There is very little information in the literature about the natural history of untreated trigger fingers.
- It is important that surgeons and patients know how many patients might get better without treatment.
- Our long surgical waiting lists for this type of procedure provide us with significant numbers of patients who do get better before we can operate on them.
- We document how many patients get better without any treatment in 7-9 months

Methods

- We studied our trigger finger waiting lists both prospectively and retrospectively from the years 2004 to 2015.
- We documented how long it took between booking the patients for surgery and offering them a surgical date on the telephone.
- We recorded how many patients declined surgery because their problem had resolved without treatment.

Results

- We booked 287 patients for trigger finger release between 2004 and 2015.
- When we called them months after their consultation to offer them a surgical date, 146 of 287 patients declined to have surgery because their symptoms had resolved without treatment.
- The average waiting time between consultation and surgical date offer in those patients who did not need surgery was 7.3 months in women and months in 8.6 in men.

Conclusion

- About half of the patients who have to wait over 7 months for trigger finger surgery get better without any treatment whatsoever.