The Relationship Between Lumbar Radiculopathy And Neuropathic Heel Pain
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Background: Back pain and plantar heel pain are common problems in the general population. Radicular pain is a type of referred pain caused by nerve root compression. Nerve entrapment is an underrecognised cause of foot pain. An association has been reported between radiculopathy and plantar heel pain secondary to nerve entrapment making it a double crush syndrome. Subsequent studies have shown a less favourable outcome with surgery for the distal lesion alone. We conducted a study to establish the relationship between lumbosacral radiculopathy and heel pain secondary to nerve compression. It further sought to establish if heel pain was more likely to occur in plantar fasciitis if a patient had radiculopathy. Methodology: A prospective cross-sectional from November 2012 to April 2013. One hundred and two patients were recruited into the study. Those with a history of trauma and one who presented with cellulitis following intralesional steroid injection were excluded. Demographic data was extracted and pain was scored using the visual analog scale. Presence or absence of prior or current radicular low back pain and laterality was established and imaging was reviewed. Results: At least 57% of patients with heel pain in all age groups had symptoms of radiculopathy. The prevalence was high in all occupation groups and presentation was not influenced by age. Conclusion: We found a high prevalence of radiculopathy in patients with plantar heel pain. In patients who had prior MRI, the root compression was at levels of L4/5 disc to L5/S1 discs.