Trauma to the ankle may result in the development of soft tissue impingement. This can produce significant pain and is not always recognized by advanced imaging modalities.1,2 In rare instances, the soft tissue impingement can be extensive, forming a “web” across the anterior ankle recess.3 Arthroscopy of the ankle is not only valuable in the treatment of this uncommon malady, but also provides a dependable diagnostic approach to an otherwise evasive finding.1,3 We present a case of an arthroscopic diagnosis and débridement of post-traumatic webbing of the anterior ankle recess. While this finding was first described in the literature in 1984, there is limited published data available regarding the identification and treatment rendered solely via arthroscopy.2,4

PURPOSE

A 36-year old man sustained a work-related inversion ankle injury two years prior to our clinical assessment. Despite extensive conservative modalities and multiple advanced imaging studies, the patient continued to have chronic pain of unknown etiology. He was then referred to our department for arthroscopic evaluation.

CASE STUDY

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The patient underwent arthroscopic synovectomy and débridement of the left anterior ankle recess. A web of soft tissue extending from the medial malleolus to the lateral malleolus was identified. Under dynamic flexion and extension, this web directly impinged within the anterior ankle recess. Following complete resection, the impingement was relieved. Histopathologic analysis demonstrated dense fibrous tissue containing cartilage and bone with reactive and degenerative changes.

RESULTS

The patient had an uneventful recovery and returned to his pre-injury functional status and unrestricted employment. At 10-months post-operative follow-up, he continued with resolution of his chronic pain; however, long-term surveillance is necessary to determine procedural longevity.

ANALYSIS and DISCUSSION

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REFERENCES