



SCHWEIZER ILLUSTRIERTE

WEEKLY HEALTH & BODY FOCUS:
CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME

A Revolutionary Approach to Hand Surgery By VERENA THURNER

Understanding Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) is a prevalent condition affecting one in ten individuals. It's especially common among women aged 40 to 60 but doesn't spare men or younger demographics. Initial symptoms often manifest at night, with the hand feeling numb, tingling, and pain in the thumb, index, middle, and ring fingers. If untreated, this pain can extend down the arm. As the condition advances, the hand's numbness becomes persistent, and in severe cases, muscle atrophy in the thumb's ball can develop, making simple tasks like gripping a cup challenging.

The root cause? The carpal tunnel, a canal in the wrist bounded by bones and connective tissue, houses tendons and the median nerve, responsible for sensation and movement in parts of the hand. Overuse can lead to tissue thickening, compressing the median nerve, resulting in CTS.

The Traditional Treatment

Traditionally, initial treatments for CTS are conservative. The wrist is immobilized with a splint or bandage, accompanied by anti-inflammatory medications or corticosteroid injections. If these measures prove ineffective, surgery becomes the next step. The standard surgical procedure involves opening the carpal tunnel to relieve the nerves, leaving a permanent scar and sidelining patients from work for up to a month.

The Swiss Breakthrough

Enter Prof. Frédéric Schuind, a Swiss-Belgian orthopedics and surgery expert, and the founder of the medical start-up, Spirecut. He has pioneered a groundbreaking surgical instrument, allowing for a minimally invasive procedure to treat CTS.

Key Features of the New Method:

Minimally Invasive: Unlike traditional surgery, this method doesn't require a surgical incision. The Sono-Instrument®, as thin as a needle, is introduced through a tiny skin puncture.

Ultrasound Guidance: The procedure employs ultrasound, ensuring precision and minimizing risks like nerve injury.

Quick and Efficient: The entire process takes mere minutes, and patients can resume their daily activities immediately.

Versatile: This technique isn't limited to CTS. It's also applicable for treating snapping finger, a condition where the finger remains flexed and can't extend.

Spirecut, under Schuind's guidance, manufactures these innovative instruments. Once they receive CE certification, which is expected in the coming weeks, Swiss doctors will begin training in this revolutionary method.

In Conclusion

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, with its potential to cause irreversible sensory and motor nerve damage, demands early diagnosis and intervention. With Switzerland's new surgical advancements, patients now have a safer, quicker, and less invasive treatment option on the horizon.

Images courtesy of Getty Images and zvg.