**Conservative Physical Therapy Interventions in the Short-Term Treatment of Plantar Fasciitis: A Systematic Review**

**Background**
- Plantar fasciitis is a very common running injury that is characterized by pain and inflammation medially along the plantar aspect of the heel where the plantar fascia inserts into the medial tuberosity of the calcaneus.
- A stabbing pain is usually experienced during weight bearing activities, especially after prolonged periods of rest or at the beginning of the activity such as the first step in the morning.
- Risk factors include hypo-mobile plantar flexors, high BMI, improper footwear, flat foot, high arch, high mileage on uneven surfaces or running downhill, and improper footwear.
- Despite multiple treatment options used to decrease the pain associated with plantar fasciitis early on, there is no data to substantiate the claim that one is better than the other. Common short-term treatments include stretching, orthotics, taping, manual therapy, and modalities.

**Purpose**
The purpose of this investigation is to systematically review current literature on short-term treatment methods for plantar fasciitis to address two primary questions: 1) the benefit of using tissue-specific stretching of the plantar fascia over general Achilles stretching and 2) the benefit of adding other short-term conservative physical therapy interventions to tissue-specific and general stretching to reduce pain.

**Methods**
A comprehensive search of PubMed, SportDiscus and CINAHL was performed using general terms related to stretching, plantar fasciitis, and treatment in order to capture the broadest results.

**Short-Term Treatments**
- Achilles Stretching
- Plantar Fascia Stretching
- Calcaneal Taping
- Trigger Point Therapy
- Orthoses

**Results**
- Five articles were identified for the systematic review.
- 1 RCT and a follow-up study to support the use of tissue-specific stretching over general Achilles stretching.
- 2 RCTs and 1 prospective randomized trial were included to address the benefit of adding other short-term interventions to stretching to decreased pain.

**Conclusion**
- Literature supports the use of tissue-specific stretching of the plantar fascia compared to general stretching of the Achilles.
- The addition of conservative physical therapy interventions including trigger point therapy, orthoses, and taping is more beneficial than stretching alone.
- Additional high-quality RCTs comparing modalities, manual therapy, and other common conservative interventions to stretching are needed to determine which treatment intervention is best.

**References**