

physiotherapy and male pelvic pain

For certain conditions causing male pelvic pain, Physiotherapy may play an integral role. Male pelvic pain is a complex issue, and even defining it can be difficult and contentious. For the purposes of this document, *male pelvic pain* is referring to pain within the lower part of your abdomen, pelvis (including your genitals) and upper groin.

first things first

It is important to understand that there can be many causes of pelvic pain, from many systems of the body. If you have pelvic pain and you haven't seen a Doctor (e.g. your GP or a Specialist), one of the first things that we would do at mhPT is to consider this need and direct you that way – there are many causes of pelvic pain that aren't driven by the musculoskeletal system that are not amenable to Physiotherapy. These include but are not limited to, digestive disorders, urological conditions (e.g., testicular torsion), infective processes and many more. Once you've been thoroughly evaluated by an appropriate Doctor, and these types of conditions have been ruled out, then there may be a role for Physiotherapy.

how common is male pelvic pain?

It is estimated that almost 10% of Australian males will experience urogenital pain, and many more will have pain in other areas of their pelvis, lower abdomen and groin. Men often suffer in silence, and frequently for an extended period of time (greater than 1 year).

what type of male pelvic pain conditions can Physiotherapy help with?

Physiotherapy can help with pelvic pain that is driven by the musculoskeletal system (that is, the soft tissues and bones of the body). There are many musculoskeletal areas of the body that can contribute to pelvic pain including the spine, sacroiliac joints (SIJs), muscles and local nerves. Two of the most common conditions treated by Physiotherapists include Pelvic Floor Tension Myalgia and Pudendal Neuralgia.

Pelvic Floor Tension Myalgia (PFTM)

Often diagnosed after a process of exclusion, PFTM is a condition characterised by tight and/or overactive pelvic floor muscles. The pain may be felt in the penis, scrotum, testicles, perineum, anus and tailbone. In addition to pain, blokes with PFTM may complain of other symptoms such as difficulty urinating, constipation and pain with ejaculation.

Pudendal neuralgia (PN)

Like PFTM, PN is often diagnosed after Doctor's have assisted to exclude other non-musculoskeletal causes of pelvic pain. PN is said to be uncommon, although its incidence appears to be increasing. PN refers to pelvic pain that is driven by dysfunction of the Pudendal Nerve. Sufferers of PN may complain of a neuropathic type pain (e.g., burning, shooting) around the base of the penis, scrotum, testicles, perineum, anus or groin. Typically, it is made worse by sitting and is relieved by lying or standing.

A comprehensive Physiotherapy assessment utilises thorough history taking, validated physical tests and specialised equipment (e.g., transperineal real-time ultrasound) to help differentiate between possible causes of pelvic pain. If it is determined that there may be a musculoskeletal cause, a trial of Physiotherapy should be considered.

how does Physiotherapy help?

Physiotherapy can help by using techniques to reduce symptoms, relieve tension, build healthy muscular activation patterns and restore normal movement and function. This may involve increasing your understanding of your condition(s), using manual therapy and by prescribing therapeutic exercises.

what do i do if i have more questions?

If you have more questions regarding the role of Physiotherapy and male pelvic pain, you can talk to your treating Doctor or contact an appropriately trained Physiotherapist. On the Darling Downs and in Toowoomba, Men's Health Physiotherapy Toowoomba (mhPT) provides dedicated services to this patient group. Please feel free to contact our clinic on the details above if you have any questions, or if you'd like to book an appointment.