

The UK FROST Trial

Rangan, et al. (2020)

What was the UK FROST Trial? ---

The UK FROST trial was a National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Programme (project ID: 13/26/01) funded multi-centre, randomised controlled trial (RCT) study, comparing three common NHS treatments for patients (over the age of 18) with a frozen shoulder.

What were the treatments? ---

Early structured physiotherapy & a steroid injection: Participants received 12 sessions of structured physiotherapy over 12 weeks. Treatment included an intra-articular steroid injection, manual mobilisation techniques and a home exercise programme. It also included patient education, advice on pain management and activity modification.

Manipulation under anaesthesia (MUA) & a steroid injection: The shoulder is manipulated to stretch and tear the tight capsule under a general anaesthetic. A steroid injection is also given. Participants were placed on the surgical waiting list and underwent routine pre-operative screening; surgery was usually performed within 18 weeks as a day case.

Arthroscopic capsular release (ACR) with MUA: Keyhole surgery under general anaesthetic. Tight capsule is opened through cutting/removing thickened parts using radiofrequency ablation. Participants were placed on the surgical waiting list and underwent routine pre-operative screening; surgery was usually performed within 18 weeks as a day case.

What was measured? ---

The study measured how effective the treatments were, patients function, quality of life, pain, recovery and any complications (e.g. infection following surgery).

What were the results?

Early structured physiotherapy & a steroid injection

- ✓ Improvement in patient-reported outcomes for pain and function
- ✓ Earlier access in the NHS, less waiting times
- ✗ More likely to require further treatment

Manipulation under anaesthesia & a steroid injection

- ✓ Improvement in patient-reported outcomes for pain and function
- ✓ More cost-effective option
- ✗ Longer NHS waiting times

Arthroscopic capsular release with MUA

- ✓ Improvement in patient-reported outcomes for pain and function
- ✓ Less likely to require further treatment
- ✗ Higher risks and costs

For more information



Frozen shoulder: which treatment should you choose?



The Lancet publication

