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Trigger Finger Syndrome

Description:

Trigger finger (and trigger thumb) is a condition affecting the tendons in the palm of the hand. These tendons pass beneath tight hoops within the palm, which are designed to prevent the tendons from bow-stringing (moving away from the bones of the hand during flexing of the fingers). Occasionally, these tendons may become swollen and if this is the case, they may slide less easily beneath these tight hoops. When this occurs, the finger sometimes becomes stuck, usually in the flexed position (when the fingertips are bent in towards the palm). It may become so difficult to straighten the fingers, that when they do straighten, they move suddenly and with a jerking movement. This is where the name “trigger finger” comes from. There are many causes of trigger finger, such as rheumatoid arthritis or local injury, but often an individual cause is not found.

Treatment:

The triggering may only be intermittent and may settle spontaneously without seeking any medical advice; however, in cases where the symptoms fail to settle, a hand surgeon can offer treatment with an injection of Cortisone into the tissue near the tendon. In the vast majority of cases, this provides a cure; however, there are a small proportion of people in whom the symptoms return and in these cases, a small operation can be performed to release the tendon. The surgery for trigger finger is a day case operation, carried out in an operating theatre under a local anaesthetic, usually leaving the hospital on the same day.

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