

(including TENNIS ELBOW)

DEFINITION

1. **Lateral epicondylitis of the elbow** is a common, well defined clinical entity characterised by pain and tenderness at the origin of the extensor muscles of the forearm.

CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS

2. There is pain at the lateral aspect of the elbow, often radiating down the forearm to the hand, and aggravated by use.
3. Tenderness can be elicited at the lateral epicondyle, and pain can be elicited by putting the relevant tendon insertion under stretch.

AETIOLOGY

4. The condition is caused by strains or tears of the forearm extensor muscles at their point of origin from bone. Although the condition sometimes follows tennis, other activities are more often responsible.
5. If left alone, the symptoms eventually subside spontaneously but may persist for over 2 years in untreated cases.
6. No pathology has been demonstrated, but it is assumed that there is a degree of rupture of aponeurotic fibres at the muscle origin, this being plentifully supplied with nerve endings. The elbow joint itself is unaffected.

CONCLUSION

7. **Epicondylitis of the elbow** is an affection of the muscle insertions at the elbow, believed to be caused by physical strain at the joint.

REFERENCES

Adams John Crawford and Hamblen David L. Outline of Orthopaedics. 11th Ed. 1990. Edinburgh. Churchill Livingstone. p235-236.

December 1992