

1076 Online Availability of Hand Splints for Patients with Common Upper Limb Nerve Entrapment Syndromes During COVID-19 Pandemic

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Aim: Splinting is first line treatment in mild to moderate cases of carpal and cubital tunnel syndrome. During COVID-19 lockdown, patients experience prolonged waiting time for their splints from specialist service if not requiring surgery. Many of our patients have not trialed splinting prior to their specialist appointments. We aimed to look at the quality of splints commercially available for the general public to purchase thereby starting treatment earlier.

Method: Hand splints for nerve entrapment are readily available through two of the biggest UK online retailers, Amazon.co.uk and eBay.co.uk. We searched the terms 'carpal' and 'cubital' tunnel splints on both sites, the top 5 results were assessed for their suitability, accessibility, and affordability.

Results: The average cost of splints for carpal tunnel syndrome on Amazon and eBay are £9 and £8 respectively, and £15 on Amazon and £10 on eBay for cubital tunnel syndrome. We found that all top 5 hand splints found on these websites are suitable for the conditions they advertised. The average time for free delivery of splints is 2 days for Amazon and 3 days for eBay. Splints are easily sized by using the sellers wrist/elbow circumference measurement guide.

Conclusions: This study has given us the confidence to encourage patients to purchase splints, at an affordable price, from online sites whilst either waiting for specialist appointments or as part of their specialist recommended treatment. With early initiation of treatment, patients may have symptomatic relief and, in some cases, avoid the need for further treatment, leading to reduced hospital footfall.