

Vascular Compromise of a Finger Due to Tenosynovitis

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A 66-year old woman came to the rheumatology outpatient clinic because of pain in the left wrist and a white discoloration of the fourth finger of 3 days' duration. Six years before, she had been diagnosed with rheumatoid factor-negative poly-osteoarthritis of her hands, feet, and cervical spine. Since then, she had frequent tenosynovitis of her wrists, probably because she used a rolling walker too vigorously. On physical examination, a striking blanching of the fourth finger was noted. Capillary refill was intact. Swelling was seen along the flexor tendons of the fourth finger, the volar side of the hand, and proximal to the flexor retinaculum of the wrist (Figure 1A). Radiographs several

months before had shown osteoarthritis of the radiocarpal joint and volar subluxation of the carpus. Fluid was aspirated from the swollen wrist; crystals were absent and cultures remained negative. The diagnosis was made of tenosynovitis of the flexor tendons with vascular compromise of the fourth finger. She was treated with a supporting brace and corticosteroid injections in the tendons of the wrist and the palm of the hand. The fourth finger itself was not injected because of concern of increased mechanical pressure leading to further deterioration of the vascularization. On followup review, the finger had regained normal color and the swelling had diminished (Figure 1B).

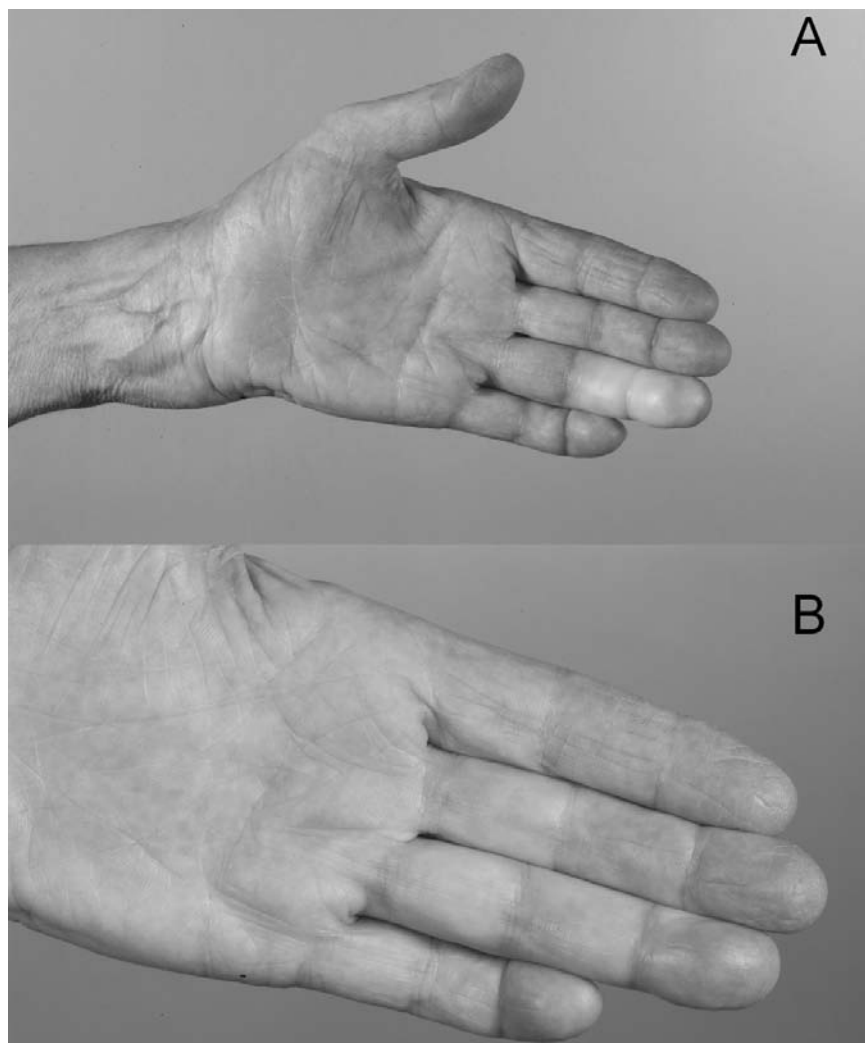


Figure 1. A. Swelling is visible along the flexor tendons of the fourth finger, the volar side of the hand, and proximal to the flexor retinaculum of the wrist. B. On followup, the finger had regained normal color and swelling had diminished.