



Should I get a shot if I have a rotator cuff tear?

The fairly recent article in the Journal of bone and joint surgery by Dr. Alexander E Weber of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles suggested that surgeons should probably be careful about considering shots in patients they're thinking about operating on the rotator cuff. The study was done by studying two large national insurance company databases to identify 22,156 patients who received a shot prior to a rotator cuff repair.

The study found that having a shot, especially within a month of surgery, increased significantly the rate of having to do a revision surgery on the rotator cuff later. Giving a shot to a patient that is quite elderly and has a huge degenerative tear that may not be repairable anyway is a hallmark of orthopedic management. However, shots in younger patients, especially for traumatic tears and acute on traumatic tears probably is not warranted.

Weber et al. Injections prior to rotator cuff repair are associated with increased rotator cuff revision rates. The Journal of Arthroscopic and Related Surgery, 2019;35: 717-724.