Insertional Achilles Tendinopathy: Surgery or No Surgery?

Insertional Achilles tendinopathy (IAT) causes chronic and debilitating heel pain and affects young and athletic, or middle-aged and sedentary individuals.

IAT can be managed by adopting either non-surgical or surgical strategies.

**Non-surgical or conservative treatment strategies include**

- Activity and shoe wear modification
- Physical therapy
- Extracorporeal shockwave therapy
- Biologics

**When non-surgical management strategies fail, surgical treatments aimed at different regions in the heel can be applied**

- Débriding the retrocalcaneal bursa and excess bone formation
- Detaching the Achilles tendon to perform a débridement, followed by reattachment (can be improved by novel suture techniques)
- Calcaneal closing wedge osteotomy
- Gastrocnemius recession
- Flexor hallucis longus tendon transfer

IAT can be optimally managed through thorough clinical examination, understanding of the underlying disease process, and a familiarity with multiple treatment techniques.