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Portable Raman Spectrometer – future diagnostic tool in cartilage tissue damage

Alterations in cartilage structure can disrupt joint function and affect tribological properties. These changes can lead to degeneration of joint surfaces and the development of osteoarthritis, which is a major cause of disability worldwide [1]. Evaluating cartilage degradation in joints is crucial for diagnosing osteoarthritis progression. Although there are diagnostic methods like X-rays and MRI, there are no accurate techniques detecting the early stages of osteoarthritis.

Raman spectroscopy is emerging as a valuable tool for analyzing tissue surfaces, which could be helpful in establishing the link between the structure of articular cartilage and the progression of degeneration [2]. Previous research indicates that Raman spectroscopy can successfully identify damaged tissues. The versatility of the technique may enable clinical applications. Spectrometer equipped with a probe, could allow for assessment of cartilage degradation during arthroscopy. In this study the human articular cartilage with varying levels of degradation was obtained during joint replacement surgeries from different patients. Preliminary *ex vivo* findings on animal and human cartilage tissue using a fiber-optic Raman probe suggest its potential for diagnosing osteoarthritis.

References

- [1] G. Peat, *et al.*, Osteoarthritis and Cartilage, 2 (2021) 180-189.
- [2] E. Pavlou, *et al.*, Annals of Joint, 3 (2018) 83.

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