An example of the work up for MTSS versus Stress fracture:

Medial shin pain in an athlete that does impact
(Runner, gymnast, soccer, volleyball, etc.)

Eval: Pain is in a strip (3 inches are longer) down medial shin (A) on the picture below

Modify activity - decrease impact/pounding
Stretch/ice/good running technique /PT
Consider taping/topical cream/massage

If improving - progress back to full impact (watch technique)
If not improving after 2-3 weeks then re-evaluate with doctor (consider stress fracture)

Eval: Pain is point tender (can be covered by a “Silver Dollar” sized coin) down medial shin (B) on the picture below

Xray - If normal: decide on MRI - or trial of MTSS treatment

Xray - If abnormal: typically boot for 6 weeks and NO practice/impact

If MRI is abnormal: (fracture or edema inside bone) then typically boot for 6 weeks and no impact/pounding

If MRI normal: consider treating for MTSS

After 6 weeks of booting and no impact
Start PT and progress back to sport (usually 3-4 weeks)

Always consider using a sport’s doctor familiar with the athlete’s sport, level, and age group!