

Arthritis in the UK – key facts

The statistics detailed below have been derived from a number of different sources (all of which are outlined at the end of the document). Arthritis Research UK is working to take the pain away for the millions of people suffering from arthritis, helping them to remain active. We are continually gathering and providing information on how arthritis affects sufferers in the UK so that people can make informed decisions about prevention, treatment and lifestyle.

This document is updated on a regular basis. All the figures detailed refer to the UK population unless otherwise stated.

1. Osteoarthritis

- More than 6 million people in the UK have painful osteoarthritis in one or both knees. Prevalence increases with age with 1 in 5 adults aged 50–59 to almost 1 in every 2 adults aged 80+ having painful osteoarthritis in one or both knees.¹
- More than 650,000 in the UK have painful osteoarthritis in one or both hips, three-quarters of whom are aged over 65.² A further one and a half million have X-ray evidence of hip osteoarthritis (but may not have any symptoms).³
- Osteoarthritis is most commonly found in the spine.
- There are almost 8.5 million people with X-ray evidence of osteoarthritis of the spine in the UK. Unlike other sites, it is more commonly found in men than women (by a ratio of 3:2).⁴ Back pain is the most frequently occurring symptom.
- More than 1 million adults* consult their GP each year with osteoarthritis.⁵

**adults: defined as people aged 15+*

Providing answers today and tomorrow

2. Joint replacements

- A total of 58,952 primary hip replacements were carried out in England and Wales in 2006/7. Of these, 94 per cent were due to osteoarthritis and 60 per cent of these operations were carried out on women.⁶ In Scotland over 6,000 hip replacements were performed in 2006/7.⁷
- A total of 62,150 primary knee replacements were performed in England and Wales in 2006/7. Ninety-seven per cent were due to osteoarthritis and 57 per cent were performed on women.⁶ In Scotland around 6,300 knee replacements were performed in 2006/7.⁷

NHS costs

- The average cost of a hip replacement is £7,350. The cost varies between trusts.⁸

3. Rheumatoid arthritis

- There are approximately 20,000 new cases of rheumatoid arthritis in the UK every year.⁹
- There are around 400,000 adults in the UK with rheumatoid arthritis. Prevalence is more common in women than men by a factor of 3:1.¹⁰
- Up to 4 out of every 10 working people with rheumatoid arthritis lose their jobs within five years, three quarters of these are for reasons directly related to their condition.¹¹ 1 in 7 give up work within one year of diagnosis.¹²

There are around 400,000 adults in the UK with rheumatoid arthritis

More than 6 million people in the UK have osteoarthritis in one or both knees

4. Economic costs

- 10 million working days were lost in 2006/7 due to musculoskeletal conditions, second only to stress, depression and anxiety.¹³
- The cost to the UK of musculoskeletal conditions is £5.7 billion annually.¹⁴
- Approximately 1 million people in the UK suffered from a musculoskeletal condition caused or exacerbated by their current or past occupation – equivalent to approximately 3 per cent of the working population.¹⁵
- Arthritis is the most common condition for which people receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA)*.¹⁶
- The total number of people receiving DLA as a result of arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions is more than twice that due to heart and chest disease and stroke combined.¹⁶
- Over half a million people receive DLA as a result of arthritis (representing more than 18 per cent of all DLA claimants) – that's more than the total for heart disease, stroke, chest disease and cancer combined.¹⁶
- Around 223,000 people receive DLA as a result of back problems and a further 220,000 people receive DLA as a result of muscle, bone and joint disease (representing 8 per cent and 7 per cent of all claimants respectively).¹⁶

** Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a benefit for people who are so disabled, have personal care needs, mobility needs or both. Claimants must be under 65.*

5. General

- More than one third of the population aged over 50 have pain at any site that interferes with their normal activities.¹⁷
- More than 10 million adults* (6 million women and 4 million men) consult their GP each year with arthritis and related conditions. This becomes more common with age with 1 in 10 people aged 15–24 seeking a GP consultation each year with a musculoskeletal problem rising to 1 in 3 people over 75 seeking a consultation.⁵

* adults: defined here as aged 15+

6. Other types of arthritis

- More than 2,500 children develop juvenile idiopathic arthritis each year.¹⁸
- Around 15,000 children in the UK have ongoing problems with juvenile idiopathic arthritis and related conditions.¹⁹
- More than 30,000 people visit their GP every year because of ankylosing spondylitis.⁵
- Over a quarter of a million adults visit their GP every year because of gout.⁵
- Around 25,000 people have systemic lupus erythematosus (lupus). It is more common in women than men by a ratio of 7:1.²⁰
- More than 6 million people have chronic back pain.²¹

Arthritis is the most common condition for which people receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

More than 10 million adults consult their GP each year with arthritis and related conditions

References

1. Peat G, Duncan R, Thomas E. Data from CAS-K study. Personal communication 2008.
2. Odling E, Valkenburg HA, Algra D, Vandenouweland FA, Grobbee DE, Hofman A. Associations of radiological osteoarthritis of the hip and knee with locomotor disability in the Rotterdam Study. *Ann Rheum Dis* 1998; 57(4):203-8.
3. Lanyon P, Muir K, Doherty S, Doherty M. Age and sex differences in hip joint space among asymptomatic subjects without structural change: implications for epidemiologic studies. *Arthritis Rheum* 2003; 48(4):1041-6.
4. Pye SR, Reid DM, Smith R, Adams JE, Nelson K, Silman AJ *et al.* Radiographic features of lumbar disc degeneration and self-reported back pain. *J Rheumatol* 2004; 31(4):753-8.
5. Royal College of General Practitioners – Birmingham Research Unit. Annual prevalence report 2006. <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/pdf/Annual%20prevalence%20report%202006.pdf> [Date accessed: 1-1-2008].
6. National Joint Registry. National Joint Registry for England and Wales. 4th Annual Report. <http://www.njrcentre.org.uk/njrcentre/AbouttheNJR/Publicationsandreports/Annualreports/tabid/86/Default.aspx> [Date accessed: 15-10-2008].
7. http://www.arthro.scot.nhs.uk/New_Developments/Main.html [Date accessed: 29-09-2008].
8. R de Verteuil, M Imamura, S Zhu, C Glazener, C Fraser, N Munro *et al.* A systematic review of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness and economic modelling of minimal incision total hip replacement approaches in the management of arthritic disease of the hip. *Health Technol Assess.* 2008; 12(26): 1-244.

9. Wiles N, Symmons DPM, Harrison B, Barrett E, Barrett JH, Scott DGI *et al.* Estimating the incidence of rheumatoid arthritis – Trying to hit a moving target? *Arthritis Rheum* 1999; 42(7):1339-46.
10. Symmons D, Turner G, Webb R, Asten P, Barrett E, Lunt M *et al.* The prevalence of rheumatoid arthritis in the United Kingdom: new estimates for a new century. *Rheumatology* 2002; 41(7):793-800.
11. Young A, Dixey J, Kulinskaya E, Cox N, Davies P, Devlin J *et al.* Which patients stop working because of rheumatoid arthritis? Results of five years' follow up in 732 patients from the Early RA Study (ERAS). *Ann Rheum Dis* 2002; 61(4):335-40.
12. Barrett EM, Scott DG, Wiles NJ, Symmons DP. The impact of rheumatoid arthritis on employment status in the early years of disease: a UK community-based study. *Rheumatology (Oxford)* 2000; 39(12):1403-9.
13. Health and Safety Executive. Estimated days (full-day equivalent) off work and associated average days lost per (full-time equivalent) worker and per case due to a self-reported work-related illness or workplace injury. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/tables/0607/swit1.htm> [Date accessed: 13-5-2008].
14. Health and Safety Executive. Musculoskeletal disorders – Why tackle them? <http://www.hse.gov.uk/healthservices/msd/whytackle.htm> [Date accessed: 1-7-2008].
15. Health and Safety Executive. Musculoskeletal disorders. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/musculoskeletal/scale.htm> [Date accessed: 1-7-2008].
16. Department for work and pensions. Disability Living Allowance – cases in payment Caseload (Thousands): Main Disabling Condition by Gender of claimant. http://83.244.183.180/100pc/dla/disabled/ccsex/a_carate_r_disabled_c_ccsex_nov07.html [Date accessed: 1-5-2008].
17. Thomas E, Peat G, Harris L, Wilkie R, Croft PR. The prevalence of pain and pain interference in a general population of older adults: cross-sectional findings from the North Staffordshire Osteoarthritis Project (NorStOP). *Pain* 2004; 110(1-2):361-8.
18. Riise OR, Handeland KS, Cvancarova M, Wathne KO, Nakstad B, Abrahamsen TG *et al.* Incidence and characteristics of arthritis in Norwegian children: a population-based study. *Pediatrics* 2008; 121(2):e299-e306.
19. Sacks JJ, Helmick CG, Luo YH, Ilowite NT, Bowyer S. Prevalence of and annual ambulatory health care visits for pediatric arthritis and other rheumatologic conditions in the United States in 2001-2004. *Arthritis Rheum* 2007; 57(8):1439-45.
20. Nightingale AL, Farmer RD, de Vries CS. Systemic lupus erythematosus prevalence in the UK: methodological issues when using the General Practice Research Database to estimate frequency of chronic relapsing-remitting disease. *Pharmacoepidemiol Drug Saf* 2007; 16(2):144-51.
21. Elliott AM, Smith BH, Penny KI, Smith WC, Chambers WA. The epidemiology of chronic pain in the community. *Lancet* 1999; 354(9186):1248-52.

Copeman House, St Mary's Court
St Mary's Gate, Chesterfield
Derbyshire S41 7TD

Tel 01246 558033 **Fax** 01246 558007
Email info@arthritisresearchuk.org
www.arthritisresearchuk.org

Registered Charity England and Wales No. 207711,
Scotland No. SC041156



Providing answers today and tomorrow

© November 2008