

Arthritis Research UK is the charity dedicated to stopping the devastating impact that arthritis has on people's lives. Everything that we do is focused on taking the pain away and keeping people active.

Our remit covers all conditions which affect the joints, bones and muscles including osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, back pain and osteoporosis. We fund research into the cause, treatment and cure of arthritis, provide information on how to maintain healthy joints and bones and to live well with arthritis. We also champion the cause, influence policy change and work in partnership with others to achieve our aims. We depend on public support and the generosity of our donors to keep doing this vital work.

These facts are drawn together from a number of different sources (see references). The figures refer to the UK population unless otherwise stated. For more data about arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions see www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information/data-and-statistics.aspx

Arthritis in the UK – facts and statistics

1. Inflammatory conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis

- Around 400,000 adults have rheumatoid arthritis in the UK.¹
- Rheumatoid arthritis is more common in women than men by a factor of 3:1.¹
- There are approximately 20,000 new cases of rheumatoid arthritis in the UK every year.²

Other conditions

- 286,000 people every year consult their GP about gout in the UK.³
- Men can develop gout as early as their mid-20s.^{3,4}
- Between 25,000 and 50,000 people have systemic lupus erythematosus (lupus). It is more common in women than men by a ratio of 7:1.^{5,6}
- There are 15,000 children in the UK with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA).⁷
- More than 2,500 children develop juvenile idiopathic arthritis each year.⁸

- Around 4,000 people in England have scleroderma.⁹
- There is 1 new case of reactive arthritis each year in UK for every 2500 people.¹⁰
- More than 30,000 people visit their GP every year because of ankylosing spondylitis.¹¹

2. Conditions of musculoskeletal pain, including osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis

- 8.75 million people in the UK have sought treatment for osteoarthritis.¹²
- A third of people aged 45 and over have sought treatment for osteoarthritis.¹²

Osteoarthritis of the knee

- 4.71 million people in the UK have sought treatment for osteoarthritis of the knee.¹²
- 4.11 million people in England have osteoarthritis of the knee.¹³
- Just over half of all people consulting about osteoarthritis have knee osteoarthritis.¹²

- Almost a quarter of people aged 75 or over in the UK have sought treatment for osteoarthritis of the knee.¹²
- 2.36 million working age people in the UK have sought treatment for knee osteoarthritis.¹²
- The number of people with osteoarthritis of the knee is estimated to increase to 6.5 million by 2020 (allowing for the size and ageing of the population and increasing levels of obesity).¹²

Osteoarthritis of the hip

- 2.46 million people in England have osteoarthritis of the hip.¹³
- 11% of population aged 45 and over in England have osteoarthritis of the hip.¹³
- 16% of women aged 75 and over in the UK have sought treatment about hip osteoarthritis.¹²

Osteoarthritis of other joints

- 1.77 million people in the UK have sought treatment for osteoarthritis of the foot or ankle.¹²
- One in 5 people who have sought treatment for osteoarthritis have it in their foot or ankle.¹²
- 1.56 million people in the UK have sought treatment about osteoarthritis of the hand or wrist.¹²
- 1 in 6 people who sought treatment for osteoarthritis have it in their hand or wrist.¹²
- 620,000 working age women in the UK (45–64 years) have sought treatment about osteoarthritis of the hand or wrist.¹²

Knee and hip joint replacements

- 97% of initial knee replacements are due to osteoarthritis.¹⁴
- 85,920 initial knee replacements were reported in 2013 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.¹⁴
- 91% of initial hip replacements are due to osteoarthritis.¹⁴
- 80,194 initial hip replacements were reported in 2013 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.¹⁴

Back pain

- More than 6 million people have chronic back pain.¹⁵

3. Osteoporosis and fragility fracture

- 3 million people in the UK have osteoporosis.¹⁶
- 300,000 fragility fractures occur each year in the UK.¹⁷
- There are over 89,000 hip fragility fractures each year in the UK.¹⁷

4. Economics and impact

Costs

- The NHS musculoskeletal health programme budget (in 2012–3) was £5.34 billion.¹⁸
- The medical and social care cost of hip fracture in the UK is around £2 billion per year.¹⁹
- The cost of treating and caring for hip fractures in the UK could rise to £6 billion by 2036.¹⁴
- £4 is saved by NHS for every £1 spent on orthotics.²⁰
- Using the STarT Back tool to stratify treatment of back pain improves health outcomes and provides an average societal saving of £675 per patient.²¹
- The estimated direct cost of physical inactivity to the NHS across the UK is £1.06 billion per year.²²
- The NHS costs associated with overweight and obesity each year are £5.1 billion.²³

Impacts

- Musculoskeletal conditions account for 30.5% of all years lived with disability.²⁴
- Musculoskeletal conditions account for 42% of all reported cases of work-related ill health.²⁵
- 30.6 million working days were lost due to sickness absence caused by a musculoskeletal condition in the UK in 2013.²⁶
- 2.81 million UK work days were lost in 2013/14 due to back problems.²⁷
- 80% people with rheumatoid arthritis report footwear problems.²⁸
- Research has found that 43% of people who were previously independent are unable to walk independently in the year after a hip fracture.²⁹

5. Musculoskeletal healthcare services

- There are over 100,000 GP consultations every day in the UK about a musculoskeletal problem.³⁰
- 21% of the population consults a GP about a musculoskeletal problem each year.³⁰
- 12% of people with musculoskeletal conditions say they have a care plan.³¹
- 18% of people with osteoarthritis have a care plan.³²
- 37% of health services in England and Wales provide some kind of fracture liaison service.³³

6. Other factors affecting musculoskeletal health

Other long term conditions

- 58% of people aged 60 and over report having a long term condition.³⁴
- 68% of people with arthritis report depression when their pain is at its worst.³⁵
- One in six people with rheumatoid arthritis has major depression.³⁶

Physical activity

- The Chief Medical Officers' national guidelines for physical activity advise that adults do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity each week.¹⁹
- In 2011/12 only 36% of adults took part in sport of moderate intensity for 30 minutes at least once a week.³⁷
- Older adults who engage in regular physical activity have around 30% lower risk of falls.¹⁹

Overweight and obesity

- Overall in 2012, 67% of men and 57% of women were either overweight or obese.³⁸
- Overweight and obesity account for 8.6% of disability-adjusted life years (DALYs).³⁹
- Obese people are more than twice as likely to develop knee osteoarthritis than those of normal body weight.⁴⁰

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Registered Charity England and Wales No. 207711,
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© December 2014

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