

Obesity Leads to Rise in Arthritis

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Did you know that there are more than 100 types of arthritis? WebMD reports, "the most common arthritis symptoms of inflammation, pain and stiffness are usually caused by degenerative arthritis (osteoarthritis). Other types of arthritis include rheumatoid arthritis and gout."

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported today that almost 50 million adults in the United States reported doctor-diagnosed arthritis during 2007-2009, and more than 21 million adults reported arthritis-attributable activity limitation (AAAL). Aging and obesity contribute to arthritis and AAAL, and based on the high prevalence of obesity in the US, researchers expect arthritis to significantly increase over the next 20 years.

Previous estimates of reported adult arthritis were about 46 million during 2003-2005, increasing to almost 50 million during 2007-2009; an increase of 1 million adults per year. The prevalence of AAAL significantly increased from 18.9 million patients to 21.1 million.

Previous analysis estimated nearly 52 million adults would be diagnosed with arthritis by 2010, and 67 million by 2030; based on the latest findings, the number of arthritis cases seem to be right on track. The same previous data indicated 19 million adults would suffer from AAAL by 2010 and 25 million by 2030, however the newest data reveals that 21.1 million individuals were living with AAAL by 2009.

"With the aging population and continued high prevalence of obesity, arthritis is predicted to increase significantly over the next 20 years," say report authors.

National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) is an annual, in-person interview survey of the health status and behaviors of the noninstitutionalized U.S. population of all ages. Researchers analyzed a sample adult

component of persons over 18 years of age. Participants were defined as having doctor-diagnosed arthritis if they answered "yes" to the question "Have you ever been told by a doctor or other health professional that you have some form of arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, lupus or fibromyalgia." Those who answered in the positive, were then asked "Are you limited in any way in any of your usual activities because of arthritis or joint symptoms?" Those who responded "yes" to both questions were categorized as having AAAL.

Knee osteoarthritis, the most common type of arthritis, is associated with obesity, often hastening disease progression, disability and the need for total knee joint replacement. Obesity also can be a factor in poor clinical outcomes after knee joint replacement and plays a role in the increasing impact of arthritis on disability, health-related quality of life and health-care costs.

Lifetime risk for diagnosis with knee osteoarthritis is 60.5% among obese individuals, double the risk for those who are normal and underweight.

Among the participants, 33.8% of women and 25.2% of men were obese, making up double the amount of participants who are normal weight or underweight, 13.8% of men and 18.9% of women.

Study authors noted the prevalence of arthritis increases significantly with age, and risk factors are affected by weight, physical activity and lifestyle factors such as smoking.

Osteoarthritis Basics:

The term "arthritis" means inflammation in joints. Osteoarthritis, a degenerative joint disease is the most common type of arthritis, associated with a breakdown of cartilage in joints occurring mostly in the weight bearing joints of the hips, knees and spine, but can also affect the fingers, thumb, neck and large toe.

Osteoarthritis causes the cartilage in a joint to lose its elasticity and become stiff making it susceptible to damage. As the cartilage wears away in some areas, tendons and ligaments stretch causing pain; with full progression, the bones could rub against each other.

Symptoms of Osteoarthritis:

- *Joint aching and soreness with movement
- *Pain after overuse or after long periods of inactivity
- *Bony enlargements in the middle and end joints of the fingers
- *Joint swelling and joint fluid accumulation

Causes of Osteoarthritis:

- *Inherited gene defect responsible for making cartilage
- *Joint abnormalities at birth
- *Obesity
- *Injuries in or near joints
- *Joint overuse, i.e. activities requiring repeated bending of the knee are at increased risk for developing

osteoarthritis of the knee

WebMD advises, "No matter which type of arthritis you have, you need an accurate diagnosis before your doctor can recommend a program for treatment."

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