

New research points to a possible gender link in knee injuries

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Gender may be associated with an increased risk of cartilage lesions in anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injured knees, according to research being presented at the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine's Annual Meeting in San Diego.

Provided by American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine

"Having articular cartilage lesions (a hole or rough spot in the cartilage of the knee) is considered a predictor of future osteoarthritis—a debilitating joint condition," said lead author Jan Harald Roetterud, MD, from Akershus University Hospital, Lørenskog, Norway. "Our research is exciting because it highlights the possibility of gender as a significant risk factor, along with age, knee trauma and time between injury and surgery exceeding 1 year, in these types of injuries."

Researchers examined data from 15,783 patients (aged 8-69 years) undergoing primary ACL reconstructions between 2005 and 2008. Of these patients, 1,012 (6.4%) had full-thickness cartilage lesions, with 372 of the total occurring in females (5.6%) and 640 in the male population (7%).

Additional stress on cartilage around the knee following an ACL injury can cause full-thickness lesions. Treatment typically involves ACL reconstruction to relieve this pressure and hopefully protect the cartilage.

"The goal of this type of research is to continually identify risk factors for injury," Roetterud, commented. "With this information we will hopefully be able to improve prevention and treatment, as well as provide new guidelines for an athlete's return to sports."

Of additional note, male team handball players also showed a higher rate of full-thickness articular [cartilage](#) injuries compared to male athletes of other sports, though the explanation for this remains unclear.

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