

Is painful knee and hand osteoarthritis in women associated with excess mortality?

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Research looking at risk of early mortality of British middle-aged women and osteoarthritis was presented today at the World Congress on Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis and Musculoskeletal Diseases. It shows that any painful knee osteoarthritis is strongly associated with early overall and cardiovascular mortality. Interestingly these findings are independent to most of the known risk factors linked with early mortality. The study was based on the data from the Chingford Study. This is community based data from a cohort of middle-aged women followed up for 24 years. It was used to evaluate the effect of knee and hand pain with or without radiographic osteoarthritis on early overall and disease specific mortality.

The researchers' objective was to compare a group of women with painful knee or hand osteoarthritis to [mortality](#) of women without osteoarthritis. Knee and hand symptoms, radiographic changes, majority of known cardiovascular risk factors and overall, cardiovascular, and cancer-related mortality were assessed based on study follow-up in 2014 and data from all available death certificates at this point.

The average follow-up was around 22 years. During that time the women with knee pain and radiographic osteoarthritis had an almost 2-fold increased risk of early overall mortality and over 3-fold increased risk of cardiovascular mortality, when compared with women without knee pain or radiographic changes. There was no link between hand osteoarthritis and excess mortality risk.

The lead author of the study, Dr. Stefan Kluzek of the ARUK Centre of Excellence for Sport, Exercise and Osteoarthritis, University of Oxford, stated, "These findings suggest that any self-reported knee pain in osteoarthritis, as opposed to hand pain, seems to be a crucial factor leading to early [cardiovascular mortality](#) and is likely to be linked with decreased mobility. Radiographic osteoarthritis without pain is not affecting long-term mortality. More research is needed to understand how people adapt to [knee pain](#), and how this leads to cardiovascular impairment."

More information: OC12 Painful knee but not hand osteoarthritis predicts excess mortality in a community-based cohort of middle-aged women with 23 years of follow-up
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