

Outcomes after hip or knee replacement surgery for osteoarthritis

A prospective cohort study comparing patients' quality of life before and after surgery with age-related population norms

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Abstract Objective: To compare the health-related quality of life of people with osteoarthritis before and after primary total hip and knee replacement surgery with that of the general Australian population.

Design: A prospective cohort study.

Setting: Three Sydney hospitals, public and private.

Participants: Patients with osteoarthritis undergoing primary total hip ($n = 59$) and knee ($n = 92$) joint replacement surgery.

Main outcome measure: Medical Outcomes Study Short Form (SF-36) scores before and 12 months after joint replacement surgery (compared with population norms).

Results: Patients in each age group showed a significant improvement in health-related quality of life after joint replacement surgery in most scales of the SF-36, particularly physical function, role physical and bodily pain. SF-36 scores for the 42 hip-replacement patients aged 55-74 years improved to equal or exceed the population norm on all scales. SF-36 scores of the 52 knee replacement patients aged 55-74 years improved, but physical function and bodily pain scores remained significantly worse than the population norm. SF-36 scores for both hip ($n = 17$) and knee ($n = 40$) replacement patients aged 75 years and over improved significantly, becoming similar to population norms for this age group.

Conclusions: Total hip or knee replacement for osteoarthritis significantly improves patient health and well-being at 12 months after surgery. Age alone should not be a barrier to surgery.

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