PREVALENCE OF BONE AND JOINT HEALTH PROBLEMS

• Bone and joint health encompasses many musculoskeletal issues, including injuries to the bones, joints, muscles, ligaments, or tendons and conditions such as arthritis or osteoporosis.¹

• Bone and joint health problems are the leading cause of disability in the United States and account for more than half of all chronic conditions in people over 50 years of age. More than one in four Americans suffers from a musculoskeletal impairment; back and knee injuries are the most prevalent.²

• Patients visited their physicians more than 132 million times to address bone and joint health problems in 2006; this was the second-most common reason for physician visits that year. Arthritis is the leading chronic condition reported by the elderly.³

WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

• Currently employed workers in the United States miss nearly 440 million days of work annually because of bone and joint injuries.⁴

• Annual direct costs related to bone and joint health problems exceed $705 billion, which is 4.9 percent of the gross domestic product according to the most recent data.⁵

• In a study of hip replacement patients, nearly all patients who were employed prior to surgery returned to the workforce. Those who failed to return to work did so for reasons unrelated to their hip conditions.⁶ ⁷

• Patients who undergo total hip replacement surgery demonstrate significantly increased life expectancy compared to patients who choose not to.⁵ ⁹

GROWING SPECIALIST SHORTAGE

• Demand for primary and revision arthroplasty (joint replacement) is expected to double in 10 years. Due to high rates of obesity and a longer-living population, the need for hip and knee replacements will increase dramatically in the next two decades.¹⁰

• The demand for knee replacements will increase 674 percent through 2030.¹¹ The demand for hip replacements will increase by 174 percent through 2030.¹² Surgeons are treating younger patients, who require newer, high-demand technologies.¹³ ¹⁴

• At the same time, there is a decreased interest in this area of medicine by medical students due to its complexities. A shortfall of at least 18 percent of orthopaedic surgeons is expected in the coming years, using conservative estimates for the number of impending retirements.¹⁵

MANY UNMET PATIENT NEEDS

• Only 9-13 percent of people needing total knee replacement, and fewer than 25 percent needing hip replacement undergo the surgery.¹⁶ ¹⁷

• Research on musculoskeletal disorders represents 2 percent of the National Institutes of Health budget, while the burden of bone and joint health problems is expected to escalate in the next 10-20 years due to the aging population and sedentary lifestyles. More research is required urgently if the health and economic burden are to be contained or lowered.

(Sources cited on back)
SOURCES CITED

1 National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey 1998-2006. Data obtained from: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Center for Health Statistics.


3 National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey 1998-2006. Data obtained from: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Center for Health Statistics.

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