



A problem worth solving

The rising cost of musculoskeletal conditions in Australia

A RESEARCH PROJECT PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

Background

In 2013 Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria (now Musculoskeletal Australia) produced the report 'A Problem Worth Solving' based on analysis completed by Deloitte Access Economics.

The purpose of the report was to identify the impact of arthritis and other chronic musculoskeletal conditions in Australia.

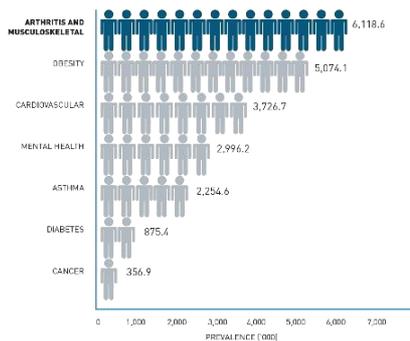
The conditions considered in this report include osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis and back problems. These are the four most prevalent conditions within the 'arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions' National Health Priority Area.

Prevalence in Australia

In 2012, there were an estimated 6.1 million cases of arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions in Australia (26.9% of the population), including 2.9 million people with back problems, 1.9 million people with osteoarthritis, 0.8 million people with osteoporosis and 0.5 million people with rheumatoid arthritis.

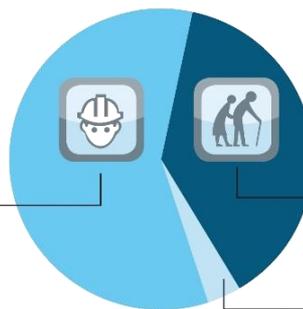
MSK CONDITIONS AFFECT LOTS OF PEOPLE

MORE THAN **ANY** OTHER NATIONAL HEALTH PRIORITY AREA



NOT JUST OLDER PEOPLE

58.4%
PRIME WORKING AGE (25-64)



In general, these conditions are more common in women than men, and more than half of those Australians with musculoskeletal conditions (58.4%) are of prime working age (25 to 64 years).

Arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions are more prevalent than any other National Health Priority Area condition including heart disease, cancer or diabetes. As our population ages over the next two decades, the number of people living with a musculoskeletal condition will rise substantially. By 2032, it is estimated that the number of cases will increase by 43% to 8.7 million, affecting 30.2% of the population.



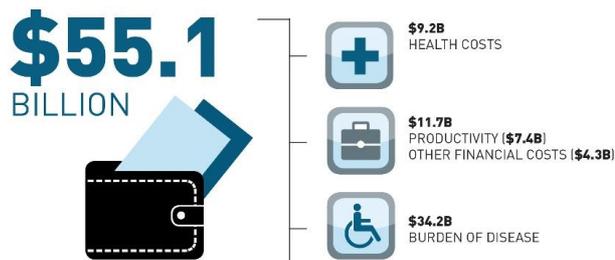
Osteoarthritis is estimated to increase by 58% or 1.1 million people (affecting 3 million people); back problems to increase by 31% or 0.9 million people (affecting 3.8 million people); osteoporosis to increase by 50 % or 0.4 million people (affecting 1.2 million people); and rheumatoid arthritis to increase by 40 % or 0.2 million people (affecting 0.7 million people).

The age group with the most cases of arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions is currently 55-64 years, however this will change to the 75+ age group by 2032.

Cost impact

The total cost of arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions in Australia was estimated as \$55.1 billion in 2012, with the largest elements being in direct health costs associated with treating musculoskeletal conditions, productivity costs and burden of disease.

THE COST IS ENORMOUS



Key areas for intervention

To tackle the enormity of this problem, a comprehensive strategic response is needed. The evidence in the report 'A Problem Worth Solving', together with data from the Global Burden of Disease 2010 study¹ highlights the current impact on direct health costs, productivity costs, linkages with pain, disability and other chronic diseases (such as cardiovascular, diabetes and mental health), as well as the future impact on the aged care system as key areas for intervention.

A Problem Worth Solving

You can find out more about the rising cost of arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions in Australia by [reading the full report](#).

How we can help

Call our MSK Help Line and speak to our nurses. Phone 1800 263 265 or email helpline@msk.org.au.

We can help you find out more about:

- arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions
- ways to live well with these conditions
- managing your pain
- upcoming webinars, seminars and other events.

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