

# Osteoarthritis pain lessened by knee brace

By ACSH Staff — October 31, 2013



<sup>[1]</sup>One of the most debilitating ailments of our aging population

is osteoarthritis, especially arthritis that affects the weight-bearing knee and hip joints. Knee arthritis can be extremely painful and extensively limit activity. A preliminary study presented at the annual meeting of the American College of Rheumatology and covered by [MedPage Today](#) <sup>[2]</sup> indicates that a particular type of knee brace can be effective in decreasing pain and perhaps limiting the joint damage caused by the disease.

Dr. David T. Felson and colleagues of the University of Manchester in England conducted a randomized trial of a patellar-femoral knee brace (one that stabilizes the knee cap and femur) on 126 patients who had daily knee pain. On average, the patients were 55 years old, were moderately obese (BMI was 31 kg/m<sup>2</sup>), and slightly over half were women. The goal of the study was to determine if the brace decreased participants knee pain and also to evaluate x-ray changes that indicate potential for joint damage.

Patients wore the brace for six weeks. At that point, those who used the brace for an average of 7.4 hours per day had a substantial decrease in reported pain, compared to a minor decrease for patients who didn't use the brace.

Further, the x-rays indicated that the no-brace patients had a slight increase in bone changes that could lead to joint damage, while the patients wearing the brace actually had a 25 percent decrease in such changes. This between-group difference was statistically significant.

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross, who practiced internal medicine and rheumatology for about 20 years, comments: "While this is only a small, preliminary study, it does provide hope that a relatively simple treatment could avert the sometimes crippling changes that osteoarthritis can cause. We need longer-term studies of this type of brace in order to better evaluate its efficacy in pain amelioration and damage prevention."

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[1] <http://acsh.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/148228392.jpg>

[2] [http://www.medpagetoday.com/MeetingCoverage/ACR/42576?xid=nl\\_mpt\\_DHE\\_2013-10-](http://www.medpagetoday.com/MeetingCoverage/ACR/42576?xid=nl_mpt_DHE_2013-10-31&utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=DailyHeadlines&utm_source=WC&utm_medium=email)

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