

Patient Understanding of Hip and Knee Replacement (arthroplasty) Data in the Public Domain

(Reviewed September 2016)

In the summer of 2013, certain data related to hip and knee replacements were published in the public domain for the first time as part of the NHS England initiative on consultant outcomes publication¹. Initially there was little consultation with the British Orthopaedic Association (BOA), but it is a concept that the BOA has embraced. Our clinical colleagues, who have a better insight into the issue, have helped the Group draw up this overview:

There is a lot of data collected about hip and knee replacements collated by different organisations. These include:

- Patient reported outcome measures (PROMs)
- National Joint Registry (www.njrcentre.org.uk)
- An online 'National Surgical Commissioning Centre',² provides various data resources, including presentations of quality indicators (on a 'dashboard') for all Clinical Commissioning Groups in England

Careful search on the internet on websites such as NHS choices will also reveal further information gathered at regional or national level.

Interpretation of the data is not entirely straightforward. There are many factors which affect the data, such as the patient mix, the type of surgery (first time compared with revision surgery) as well as the other concurrent medical illnesses that you (the patient) may have. Bear this in mind when trying to compare units directly. For example, many of the independent sector treatment centres would not treat patients who are overweight, diabetic or on warfarin (a blood thinning medication) which all raise the risk of post-operative complications.

Commonly used patient reported outcome measures (PROMs) include the Oxford hip and knee score as well as the EQ5D (a standardised measure of health outcome). The Oxford scoring system in particular can be measured in different ways but is based on a 12 point questionnaire and is a validated tool to assess improvement following joint surgery. The PROMs data for hip and knee replacements show that it is one of the best operations available to improve quality of life for patients.

The latest National Joint Registry (NJR) data has been published on its website and covers many aspects including the number of hip and knee replacements by organisation and surgeon and the types of replacements, manufacturers and revision rates

The NJR also uses funnel plots (advanced mathematical techniques) to assess the expected mortality rate for that procedure. The intention is that surgeons are within the limits and those who fall outside these limits can then look at their practice in more detail. There may be perfectly valid reasons why they are perceived to be outliers using this data. In particular some surgeons may take on particularly complex

1. Available online at: <http://www.njsurgeonhospitalprofile.org.uk/>
2. Available online at: <http://www.rcseng.ac.uk/healthcare-bodies/nscc/data-tools>

patients that have been referred to them from all over the country or have used implants that have subsequently been shown to have a higher failure rate. The NJR has in place mechanisms to help investigate 'outlier' surgeons and to look at reasons for this.

The orthopaedic community accepts that the data is not totally accurate but that this should improve over time. The BOA is committed to this process to ensure the highest standards are practiced nationally. This wealth of data may confuse some patients but you are encouraged to discuss this data with your surgeon if you have further questions. The data itself may be complex but you should not feel anxious with respect to discussing implant choice or any other aspect of your care with your surgeon.

1. Available online at: <http://www.njsurgeonhospitalprofile.org.uk/>
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