

Australian study links weight gain with total knee replacement

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Preventing weight gain can help avoid total knee replacement



Preventing weight gain from early adulthood could reduce knee replacements in Australian adults by almost 30 per cent and save the health system \$373 million per year, new research has found.

The Monash University-led study found preventing weight gain from young adulthood to late midlife to reduce overweight/obesity could significantly reduce the cost burden of total knee replacements.

Published in *Osteoarthritis and Cartilage*, the study examined the association between patterns of weight gain (body mass index (BMI) trajectories) from early adulthood to late midlife and the risk of total knee replacement for osteoarthritis.

Senior author and Monash University Professor Flavia Cicuttini heads the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine's Musculoskeletal Epidemiology Unit.

According to Professor Cicuttini, the results underlined the importance of prevention in improving health and reducing health costs. She said while weight loss was recommended for people with osteoarthritis who were overweight or obese, this was often too little too late.

Professor Cicuttini said a "call to action" was needed for knee joint health. "We also need to be sending out the message that it is important to make sure that people don't continue to gain more weight," she said. "Although recommendations to lose weight are important if a person is carrying excess weight, this can be difficult to achieve for most people."