

AUT Researchers seeking sufferers of Osteoarthritis

The Health and Rehabilitation Research Institute at AUT University (North Shore Campus) is running a series of research studies investigating exercise and pain relief strategies for people with arthritis of the knee. In New Zealand it is estimated that 16% of the population aged fifteen or over, or around 1 in 6 people, will be living with one form of arthritis. This prevalence is expected to grow to almost 20% by the year 2020. Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis and in New Zealand, ranks as the 6th leading cause of years lost to disability.

The end point of osteoarthritis is often joint replacement surgery, usually due to severe joint pain. The costs associated with surgery are considerable, and in the public health system the waiting lists are growing longer. Researchers have demonstrated that patients deteriorate significantly with respect to pain and function while waiting for their joint replacement surgery. The fact that patients may be waiting longer to receive joint replacement surgery has prompted researchers at AUT to investigate other conservative therapies such as exercise, acupuncture and manual therapy that may help to reduce the burden of this disease to the patients and to the community at large.

Researchers at AUT are currently interested in non-pharmacological alternatives to pain relief in people with osteoarthritis, as pain relieving drugs may only be partially effective and can sometimes have serious side effects. A study is about to begin at AUT's Health and Rehabilitation Research Institute investigating the effectiveness of acupuncture and manual therapy in people with osteoarthritis of the knee. The study involves measuring changes in pain and physical function after 2 weeks of acupuncture and manual therapy treatment. It is hoped that the findings from this study will give us a better understanding of how acupuncture and manual therapy work, helping to identify those people who will benefit most from these types of treatment.

If you are over 50 years of age and have moderate to severe osteoarthritis in your knee we would like to see if you are interested in participating in the study.

If you would like to be involved and wish to obtain more information please contact:

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