



AOA
AUSTRALIAN
ORTHOPAEDIC
ASSOCIATION

Well-being of joint replacement patients positive but significant delays a concern

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Australian joint replacement patients have spoken out for the first time about their mental wellbeing and general health prior to, and post, joint replacement surgery with overall patient well-being after joint replacement 13% higher than their pre-operative well-being.

The new data captured for the first time, by the Australian Orthopaedic Association's National Joint Replacement Registry (the Registry), will assist Australian hospitals and orthopaedic surgeons better manage pain and general wellbeing of the 100,000 patients who undergo joint replacement surgery every year.

57,000 Australian patients completed the Patient Reported Outcomes Measures (PROMs) survey over the past 12 months, providing insight into their mobility, pain, joint function, mental health and quality of life both before and after joint replacement surgery.

AOA President Dr Michael Gillespie said, "After joint replacement surgery overall wellbeing increased almost 10 basis points from pre-operative (69%) to post-operative (78%). Also pleasing was the proportion of patients who were 'very satisfied' following hip and knee replacement surgery which was 87% and 81% respectively."

"Providing access to patients of their results provide patients with a meaningful and effective resource to help them make informed decisions about their health. Initial feedback from patients include that it's helpful to compare their results with others of a similar demographic, and to know that they can benchmark their recovery.

"Through the Registry we will continue to monitor the outcomes of joint replacement surgery. We know that by monitoring joint replacement and patient health outcomes, we can maximise patient benefits of joint replacement as well as the quality of healthcare as a whole," Dr Gillespie said.

The data forms part of the Registry's Annual Report into joint replacement surgery, including the most popular procedures (hip, knee and shoulder) performed in hospitals across Australia, and an overview of the impact of COVID-19 on joint replacement surgery in 2020.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on the rates of elective surgery, for the first time since the Registry started collecting data, knee replacement decreased by 6.8%, hip replacement decreased by 4.8%, while shoulder replacements decreased by 1.8% in the 12 months to December 2020.

"In total there were 5.7% fewer hip, knee and shoulder joint replacement procedures performed in 2020 compared to 2019. This equates to just over 7,000 fewer procedures. However, this number does not include the anticipated increase in procedures that would have normally occurred. Taking this into account, the likely reduction in procedures during 2020 was over 11,000.

"COVID has naturally had an effect on the suspension of elective orthopaedic surgery to preserve health resources and as a control measure for the infection. However, wait times for elective surgery in most of Australia's hospitals has been an issue prior to the COVID outbreak," said Dr Gillespie.

Prior to COVID around 33% of Australia's total knee, hip and shoulder replacements per annum were conducted in public hospitals, considerably less than the 50% (1.2 million) that is planned and budgeted for. As a result there was already significant unmet need

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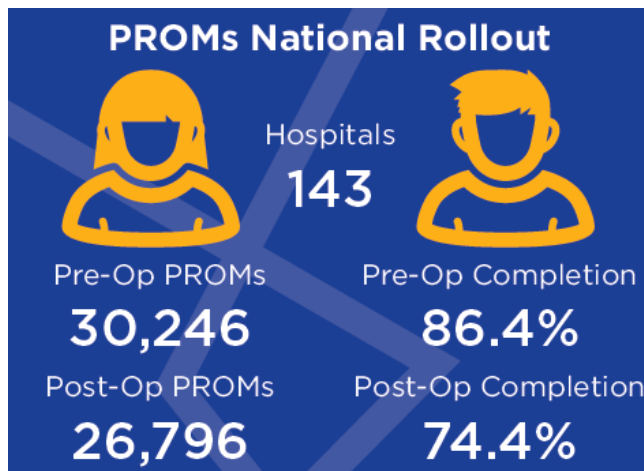
and consequent delay for public patients prior to COVID.

“The AOA believes and has advocated for a more comprehensive and sophisticated approach to the current national category system that is failing many Australians with chronic health conditions. We support the judgement of orthopaedic surgeons to prioritise their patients within ‘the allocation’ of operative surgery, in order to move through the backlog of surgeries in the best and safest way possible,” added Dr Gillespie.

The AOANJRR Annual Report is available at: <https://aoanjrr.sahmri.com/annual-reports-2021>

ENDS

Appendix:



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About the Australian Orthopaedic Association

The Australian Orthopaedic Association (AOA) is the peak professional body for orthopaedic surgeons in Australia. AOA provides high quality specialist education, training and continuing professional development. AOA is committed to ensuring the highest possible standard of orthopaedic care and is the leading authority in the provision of orthopaedic information to the community. AOA actively supports scientific research and orthopaedic humanitarian initiatives in Australia and overseas.