



Arthritis NZ
Mateponapona
Aotearoa

Living well with arthritis

Arthritis Confidence Index: Voices of the Community 2025

Results of Arthritis NZ Mateponapona Aotearoa's 2025 Arthritis Confidence Index (ACI) survey are now available, providing valuable new information on what life is like for people living with the condition.

More than 1,560 people with arthritis participated in the survey, subtitled "Voices of the Community", in October and November 2025, which is one of the largest studies of its kind undertaken by a health charity in New Zealand.

Following the launch of the survey in late 2024, the ACI provides Arthritis NZ with the most up-to-date information, data and understanding of issues its consumer community faces. Survey findings also inform the organisation's work, including advocacy activities and relationships with the health sector. The survey will continue to be conducted annually.



Key findings of the survey are:

- A significant majority of respondents (73%) consider their arthritis to be a disability.
- Many people (69%) have osteoarthritis, 24% have rheumatoid arthritis while the rest have other forms of arthritis. Many have more than one form (there are 140 different types of arthritis).
- Almost half (49%) experience moderate pain levels in a typical week, 21% mild pain; 20% severe pain; and 5% very severe pain.



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- Over half (58%) felt their mental health and wellbeing had been adversely affected by arthritis, with almost a quarter (23%) having had a mental health diagnosis.



Over half

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- About a quarter (26%) could not exercise or had severe problems exercising and 53% felt their personal health was poor or only fair. Only 29% said they had good health. Twelve percent had taken sick leave in the previous 12 months due to their condition and 13% had worked when they should have taken sick leave.

43% had either borrowed money or experienced financial anxiety



- Sixteen per cent reported loss of earnings through being unable to work and 43% had either borrowed money (22%) or experienced financial anxiety or stress (21%) due to their condition.

- Many (78%) of participants live with another medical condition, a six per cent increase on 2024.

- Seventy percent were either dissatisfied (30%) or very dissatisfied (40%) with Government management of the health sector, an eight percent increase from 2024. About a third (32%) disagreed (16%) or strongly disagreed (16%) with the statement that life for people with arthritis would improve over the coming year.



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- Over half (57%) felt their GP understood their condition and needs. Most (63%) were able to get a GP appointment within a month but for 13% it had taken one to two months, a five percent increase on 2024. Specialist wait times ranged from within one to over six months.
- Most respondents (78%) were not using AI tools to access health information regarding arthritis.
- Many ACI respondents are of working age - 17% of participants were aged 35 to 54 and 52% 55 to 74 years old.

Arthritis NZ is extremely grateful to the respondents who shared their lived experiences and views in the survey.

The ACI was prepared by Dr Richard Griffiths, Research Manager at Arthritis NZ, together with input from colleagues and market research partner Insights HQ

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- ✉ info@arthritis.org.nz
- 🌐 www.arthritis.org.nz
- ☎ 0800 663 463