



## **Improving the management and treatment of osteoarthritis will be the focus of a forthcoming symposium on July 10<sup>th</sup> in Auckland - of interest to all health reporters**

Approximately 400,000 people in New Zealand are affected by osteoarthritis, and it is one of the leading causes of disability in this country. Unfortunately, the healthcare system fails to deliver the most recommended treatments for osteoarthritis, according to all major international guidelines. Instead, it provides less effective, less cost-effective, and in some cases, harmful treatments to New Zealanders with osteoarthritis.

Joint replacement surgery has become a common expectation of people with arthritis, with most becoming resigned to the idea that surgery is the solution for managing their osteoarthritis. But hospitals are struggling to meet demand. While joint replacement surgery is necessary and very effective for people with severe end-stage osteoarthritis, less than 20% of people with osteoarthritis will reach that stage.

International and local evidence demonstrates that much can be done to manage osteoarthritis in the community and primary care settings, to help those with osteoarthritis “live well with OA”. Surgery should only be considered following adequate delivery of a well-supported, holistic self-management programme in primary and community care. However, New Zealand does not have a national model of care for the management of osteoarthritis (i.e. a standardised pathway with quality standards that all sectors of the public healthcare system should be measured against).

This symposium will see several New Zealand and international osteoarthritis experts come together to review international research and best practice on how this serious disease can be better managed. All attendees will also contribute to priority-setting to help shape the recommendations to be presented to government ministers, health funders and policymakers in November this year.

Keynote speakers will include:

- Professor Krysia Dziedzic and Dr Maarten De Wit (Keele University, UK): “Research and initiatives to improve health delivery for people with osteoarthritis in the UK and Europe”.
- Professor David Hunter (University of Sydney): “International efforts and progress in improving health delivery for people with osteoarthritis”.

Three presentations will be of particular local significance:

- AUT Associate Professor Peter Larmer (Co-Chair of Mobility Action Programme: MAP) will present the evaluation of MAP - a New Zealand programme developed by the Ministry of Health to trial early intervention programmes and deliver evidence and community-based interventions for people with musculoskeletal conditions, including osteoarthritis.
- Mr John Mutu-Grigg’s (Auckland-based orthopaedic surgeon) presentation, Hip and knee replacements in indigenous populations - Where do Māori stand?
- The launch of the online self-management course My Joint Pain by Arthritis New Zealand- a comprehensive guide to joint pain and osteoarthritis for consumers and health professionals.

Link to the programme here- <https://otago.eventsair.com/2021-osteoarthritis-basecamp/programme>

For further information on osteoarthritis and the conference, please contact:

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