2006 Georgia Data Summary: ARTHRITIS

Arthritis and chronic joint symptoms affect almost half of adult Georgians and are a leading cause of disability.

ARTHRITE AND OTHER RHEUMATIC CONDITIONS

WHAT IS ARTHRITIS?

Arthritis refers to over 100 related conditions that affect the joints, surrounding tissue, and connective tissue. Arthritis and other rheumatic conditions include osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, gout, fibromyalgia, and others.

SURVEILLANCE CASE DEFINITION

Doctor-diagnosed arthritis is defined as having been diagnosed with arthritis or other rheumatic conditions by a physician or health professional.

PREVALENCE

• About 1 in 4 adult Georgians reported doctor-diagnosed arthritis in 2005.

• Doctor-diagnosed arthritis is more common in women (29%) than men (22%).

• Doctor-diagnosed arthritis is more common in whites (27%) and blacks (25%) than Hispanics (11%).

• Among race and sex groups, white females have the highest prevalence of doctor-diagnosed arthritis (32%), and white males have the lowest (23%).

• The prevalence of doctor-diagnosed arthritis increases with age, from about 4% among 18-24 year olds to 57% among those 65 years and older.

PREVALENCE BY HEALTH DISTRICT

The metropolitan Atlanta area has the lowest prevalence of doctor-diagnosed arthritis (less than 1 in 5) while the south-central region of Georgia has the highest (almost 1 in 3).

HOSPITALIZATIONS

• In 2004, there were 22,451 hospitalizations with a primary diagnosis of arthritis. Of these, osteoarthritis accounted for 62%.

• Total hospital charges for arthritis exceeded $680 million in 2004 with the average length of stay lasting about 4.4 days.

RISK FACTORS

• Obesity, injury, and family history are risk factors for arthritis. Appropriate physical activity can prevent arthritis and reduce arthritis-related disability.

• Over 66% of adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis are physically inactive or insufficiently active.

• 36% of adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis are obese.
IMPACT OF ARTHRITIS

Adults with arthritis are more likely to report poor health, limitations due to joint symptoms, and injuries.

- 34% of adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported fair or poor general health (versus good, very good, or excellent general health).
- Almost half of adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported days of poor physical health during the past 30 days; 37% reported days of poor mental health during the past 30 days.
- 48% of adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported days when poor health kept them from doing their usual activities during the past 30 days.
- 41% of adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported limitations in daily activities; 41% reported limitations in work-related activities.
- 17% of adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported having a fall in the past 3 months; 44% of whom were injured due to the fall.

ACCESS TO CARE

Many adults who may have arthritis have not seen a doctor for their joint symptoms, and many adults with arthritis cannot see a doctor due to costs.

- Almost half of those reporting chronic joint symptoms, but who have not been clinically diagnosed with arthritis, have not seen a doctor for their joint symptoms.
- Almost half of adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis or chronic joint symptoms needed to see a doctor in the past 12 months but could not because of costs.

ARTHRITIS MANAGEMENT

Physicians and health care providers can recommend exercise and weight control for those who could benefit from them.

- Among obese adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis, only 65% were recommended by a doctor to lose weight to manage their arthritis, and only 55% were recommended both to lose weight and to exercise.
- Among adults with normal weight and doctor-diagnosed arthritis, only 49% were recommended to exercise to manage their arthritis.

COMORBIDITY

Adults with arthritis are more likely to have other chronic diseases or modifiable risk factors.*

- 3 in 4 adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported having other chronic diseases or modifiable risk factors.*
- 1 in 3 adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported having high blood pressure; 1 in 3 adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported ever having high cholesterol.
- 1 in 8 adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported having diabetes.
- 1 in 20 adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported having angina or coronary heart disease.

*High cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking, asthma, diabetes, heart attack, angina/coronary heart disease, and stroke

Data source: Georgia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
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Visit http://www.health.state.ga.us/epi/cdiee/arthritis.asp for more information about arthritis in Georgia.