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

ARTHRITIS 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 2003.

• Doctor-diagnosed arthritis is more common in women (30%) than men (23%).

• Doctor-diagnosed arthritis is more common in whites (30%) than blacks (22%) or Hispanics (18%).

• Among race and sex groups, white females have the highest prevalence of doctor-diagnosed arthritis (33%), and black males have the lowest (17%).

• The prevalence of doctor-diagnosed arthritis increases with age, from about 5% among 18-24 year olds to 60% among those 65 years and older.

PREVALENCE BY HEALTH DISTRICT

The metropolitan Atlanta area has the lowest prevalence of doctor-diagnosed arthritis while the southern region of Georgia has the highest.

HOSPITALIZATIONS

• In 2003, there were 19,499 hospitalizations with a primary diagnosis of arthritis. Of these, osteoarthritis accounted for 59%.

• Total hospital charges for arthritis exceeded $533 million in 2003 with the average length of stay lasting about 4.5 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 60% of people with doctor-diagnosed arthritis are physically inactive or insufficiently active.

• Nearly 30% of people with doctor-diagnosed arthritis are obese.
IMPACT OF ARTHRITIS

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

- 30% of people with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported fair or poor general health (versus good, very good, or excellent general health).
- Almost half of people with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported days of poor physical health during the past 30 days; 43% reported days of poor mental health during the past 30 days.
- 43% of people with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported days when poor health kept them from doing their usual activities during the past 30 days.
- 38% of people with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported limitations in daily activities; 41% reported limitations in work-related activities.
- 17% of people 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 people who may have arthritis have not seen a doctor for their joint symptoms, and many people 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 1 in 4 people with doctor-diagnosed arthritis needed to see a doctor in the past 12 months but could not because of costs.

ARTHРИTIS 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 47% were recommended by a doctor to lose weight to manage their arthritis, and only 38% were recommended both to lose weight and to exercise.
- Among people with normal weight and doctor-diagnosed arthritis, only 36% were recommended to exercise to manage their arthritis.

COMORBIDITY

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

- 7 in 10 people with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported having other chronic diseases or modifiable risk factors.*
- 1 in 3 people with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported having high blood pressure.
- 1 in 9 people with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported having asthma.
- Almost 1 in 10 people with doctor-diagnosed arthritis reported having diabetes.

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

Data source: 2003 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
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Visit http://www.health.state.ga.us/epi/cdиеe/arthritis.asp for more information about arthritis in Georgia.