

## **Orthopaedic Connection**

### **Knee Arthritis - Affect of Gender**

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.  
Orthopaedic Surgeon

#### ***Transforming patient information into patient understanding.***

Sorry to tell you this ladies, but knee arthritis develops almost two times more often in women than men as they age.

- The decline in estrogen with menopause may contribute to the upsurge in knee arthritis in older women.
- Women as they age have a lower amount of a growth factor hormone that maintains healthy bone and muscle.
- Women are more physically disabled and have more symptoms than men with the same degree of arthritis.

#### **Knee Replacement**

Women who undergo knee replacement have more advanced arthritis than men do. Surgery for severe knee arthritis is underutilized in men and women, but it is 3 times more underutilized in women than men.

Anyone facing a procedure as big as a total knee replacement has a right to be anxious, but the anxiety level in females has always been higher in patient studies.

Then there is the factor known as "**Never catch up**". This means that patients who delay having a knee replacement for several years never achieve as good a result from the surgery when they do have it, compared with those who had it sooner.

#### **Results of Knee Replacement**

Some large studies have reported that 15 - 30% of patients have less improvement than they had expected after total knee replacement. It is well known that patients undergoing total hip replacement, as a group, are more satisfied with their surgery than patients undergoing total knee replacement.

Women and men seem to have about the same degree of satisfaction after total knee replacement even though women tend to wait longer to have surgery.

#### **Pain**

A study from the Mayo Clinic reported that women have more pain than men in the early days and weeks after total knee surgery. Younger patients of both sexes have more pain than older patients.

### **Female Total Knee**

A company came out two years ago with a total knee only for females. It said this was needed because the anatomy of the female knee is different from a male. This is true to a minor extent. Most Orthopaedic Surgeons believe as I do that if you have a large number of different sizes of total knee prostheses you can choose the one that is correct for your women patients.

The LCS total knee prosthesis that I have used for several years has worked very well for me, because it has a large number of sizes that fit all of my women patients.

So no, I don't believe women need a specific "women's total knee".

Hopefully this discussion has given you some information you didn't know before about the differences between total knees in men and women.

### **Office Website and Gratiot County Herald Archive**

[www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com) and Your Orthopaedic Connection provide all the Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal information you need! And you can reach the Archive of all GCH previous articles through the website.

All past articles are listed by title and the complete text is available at the click of a mouse.

All of the information available concerns what I treat daily in the office and hospital. Log on and check it out.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free functional lives. I specialize in you.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush