

Study seeks non-surgical solutions to knee arthritis

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University of Queensland researchers are seeking solutions that could save billions of dollars by helping almost half a million Australians avoid the need for knee joint replacements.

UQ School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences PhD candidate Narelle Wyndow is seeking participants for a study looking at [pain](#)-free, non-surgical interventions to treat kneecap osteoarthritis.

Ms Wyndow said almost 450,000 [knee](#) joint replacements were

performed in 2013, costing Australia an estimated \$7.7 billion annually.

"This surgery is expected to increase by 100 per cent in Australia and 673 per cent in the USA and based on Australia's ageing population and increasing levels of obesity, these figures could actually be much higher," she said.

"The average procedure costs \$18,000. There's an urgent need for simple, effective interventions that will delay or negate the need for costly surgery.

"Kneecap arthritis is one of the most common types of [knee arthritis](#) and causes pain and stiffness in the knee, particularly with activities such as walking up and down stairs and squatting.

"We know little about the features of this disease or what treatments may be effective."

The study will compare the structure of feet and legs in people suffering from kneecap pain and arthritis with those of people who have no pain.

The researchers will also evaluate whether prescription footwear interventions can improve [knee pain](#), joint structure and leg function.

Participants in the study will receive a free pair of New Balance shoes, with or without shoe inserts, and will have x-rays and MRI scans of their knees at the beginning of the study and MRI scans again at the end of the study to determine if the interventions have improved bone and joint health.

"Ultimately, we hope the outcomes of this research will identify effective non-surgical interventions to improve pain and function in people with kneecap arthritis," Ms Wyndow said.

More information: People aged over 40 who are interested in taking part in the study should email n.wyndow@uq.edu.au.

Provided by University of Queensland

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