

[IMAGE]

One-Third of Americans Suffer Joint Pain

The leading causes of disability in the U.S. are arthritis and related rheumatic conditions, which cause joint pain and inflammation in sufferers. Arthritis results from immune system disorders or wearing down of the cartilage and tissues of the joints. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the prevalence of arthritis and chronic joint pain and stiffness may be higher than previously thought.

Questionnaires administered to randomly chosen adults in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico provided data on arthritis incidence. Arthritis prevalence was defined as doctor diagnosis; prevalence of chronic joint symptoms, or CJS, was determined when patients responded "yes" to "pain, aching, stiffness, or swelling in or around a joint" in the previous year during "most days for at least a month."

The overall prevalence of CJS/arthritis was 33%, or approximately 70 million adults. By categories, the percentages of American adults estimated to suffer from specific conditions were: arthritis (11%), CJS (10%) and both CJS and physician-diagnosed arthritis (12%).

Arthritis symptoms can affect anyone, particularly the elderly, women and those who are overweight and lead sedentary lives. The best way to avoid developing arthritis is to maintain a healthy diet and weight and get adequate sleep. Conservative treatments for arthritis include low-impact regular aerobic exercise, massage, acupuncture and heat and cold therapy.

Reference:

Bolen J, Helmick CG, et al. Prevalence of self-reported arthritis or chronic joint symptoms among adults - United States, 2001. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (CDC) 2002;51(42), pp. 948-950.

For more studies on joint pain, go to

<http://www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/musculoskeletal/extremities/index.html>.

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