

## **Musculoskeletal Health Summary**

### **The role of the GP in the care of people with musculoskeletal problems**

Musculoskeletal problems constitute a significant proportion of GP consultations. As a GP, your role is to:

- Advise appropriately to support the self-care and prevention of problems
- Intervene urgently when patients present with emergencies or 'red flag' symptoms
- Coordinate care with other health professionals leading to effective and appropriate acute and chronic management. Care of patients with musculoskeletal problems will often involve GPs working closely with specialists in orthopaedic, rheumatology and pain medicine as well as with allied health disciplines such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, osteopathy and rehabilitation medicine
- Coordinate the holistic care of complex patients presenting with symptoms affecting the musculoskeletal system
- Communicate effectively taking into account the psychosocial impact of musculoskeletal problems on the patient, their family, friends, dependents and employers. People who experience chronic pain often have comorbid psychological diagnoses, and their care may include counselling support.

## Key Areas for Exam preparation

### Common and important conditions

- Avascular necrosis
- Bone cancers including metastatic disease, Ewing's and soft-tissue sarcoma
- Cervical spinal disorders including cervical spondylosis, torticollis and 'whiplash' injuries, vertebral fracture and long-term consequences
- Congenital/inherited diseases such as osteogenesis imperfecta, Marfan's syndrome, Ehlers- Danlos syndrome, Gaucher's disease, hypermobility syndromes
- Crystal arthropathies such as gout, pyrophosphate arthropathy
- Fractures, dislocations, haematoma, sprains, strains and other significant soft-tissue trauma: recognition and principles of management
- Hand disorders such as trigger finger, Dupuytren's contracture, carpal tunnel syndrome, ulnar nerve compression. Foot disorders such as plantar fasciitis, digital neuroma
- Infection such as septic arthritis and osteomyelitis
- Inflammatory arthritis and connective tissue diseases such as: rheumatoid arthritis, sero- negative arthritis such as psoriatic arthropathy and axial spondyloarthritis
- Lymphoedema
- Muscle disorders such as polymyalgia rheumatica and giant cell arteritis, polymyositis and dermatomyositis, fibromyalgia, muscular dystrophies and myasthenia gravis
- Osteoarthritis including joint replacement surgery risks and complications
- Osteoporosis: primary and secondary
- Reactive arthritis, viral arthropathy; connective tissue disorders such as systemic lupus erythematosus, scleroderma, systemic sclerosis
- Skeletal problems including disorders of calcium homeostasis such as osteomalacia, rickets, Paget's disease (see also RCGP Topic Guide Endocrinology and Metabolic Problems).
- Soft tissue disorders such as bursitis, epicondylitis, Achilles tendon problems
- Spinal disorders including mechanical back pain, disc lesions, malignancy (primary or metastatic), infection (including osteomyelitis, osteoarthritis, spinal stenosis, osteochondritis), developmental disorders (such as scoliosis and kyphosis), trauma including vertebral fracture and long-term consequences, acute neurological emergencies (such as cauda equina)
- Chronic pain (such as complex regional pain syndrome)
- Trauma including fractures and primary care management of injuries/ first-aid
- Wounds (including surgical) and lacerations: management and principles of care.

## Suggested Resources

### General Information

- <https://www.versusarthritis.org> Useful resource for examinations and conditions and PILs
- <http://arma.uk.net>
- Arthritis Care [www.arthritiscare.org.uk](http://www.arthritiscare.org.uk)
- Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance <http://arma.uk.net>
- British Association of Occupational Therapists/College of Occupational Therapists [www.cot.co.uk](http://www.cot.co.uk)
- British Chiropractic Association [www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk](http://www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk)
- British Institute of Musculoskeletal Medicine [www.bimm.org.uk](http://www.bimm.org.uk)
- The British Orthopaedic Association [www.boa.ac.uk](http://www.boa.ac.uk)
- The British Pain Society [www.britishpainsociety.org/](http://www.britishpainsociety.org/)
- The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy [www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk)
- London College of Osteopathic Medicine [www.lcom.org.uk](http://www.lcom.org.uk)
- The College of Podiatry [www.scpod.org](http://www.scpod.org)
- Pain Community Centre [www.paincommunitycentre.org](http://www.paincommunitycentre.org)
- Society of Musculoskeletal Medicine [www.sommcourses.org/about-somm](http://www.sommcourses.org/about-somm)

### Avascular necrosis

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=osteonecrosis+treatment>

### Bone cancer

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=bone+cancer>
- <https://clinicalsarcomaresearch.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13569-016-0047-1>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?ps=30&q=ewing+sarcoma>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=soft+tissue+sarcoma>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=metastatic+bone+cancer>

### Cervical spine

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=guidelines+on+cervical+spine+injury>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=cervical+spondylosis>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=torticollis>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=whiplash>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=vertebral+fracture>

### Congenital / inherited disease

- <https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/conditions-and-treatments/conditions-we-treat/osteogenesis-imperfecta>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?ps=50&q=osteogenesis+imperfecta>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=Marfan%27s+syndrome>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=ehlers+danlos+syndrome>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=gaucher+syndrome>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=hypermobility+syndrome>

### Crystal arthropathies

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=gout>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=pyrophosphate+arthropathy>

## Fractures

- <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/FRAX/>
- <https://qfracture.org>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=fractures>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=hip-fracture>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=Pathological+fractures>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=dislocations>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=haematoma>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=sprains>

## Hand / Foot disorders

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=trigger+finger>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=Dupuytren's%20contracture>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=carpal%20tunnel>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=ulnar%20nerve%20compression>

## Infection

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=osteomyelitis>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?pa=1&q=Infectious+bone+diseases>

## Inflammatory arthritis

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?ps=50&q=seronegative+arthritis>
- <https://bnf.nice.org.uk/treatment-summary/spondyloarthritis.html>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=rheumatoid+arthritis>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?pa=2&q=psoriatic+arthritis>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=ankylosing+spondylitis>
- Children's Chronic Arthritis Association (CCAA) [www.ccaa.org.uk](http://www.ccaa.org.uk)
- National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society [www.nass.co.uk](http://www.nass.co.uk)
- National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society [www.nras.org.uk](http://www.nras.org.uk)
- The British Society for Rheumatology [www.rheumatology.org.uk/](http://www.rheumatology.org.uk/)
- Primary Care Rheumatology Society [www.pcrsociety.org](http://www.pcrsociety.org)
- The Psoriasis Association [www.psoriasis-association.org.uk](http://www.psoriasis-association.org.uk)

## Lymphoedma

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=lymphoedema>
- <https://www.lipoedema.co.uk/uk-best-practice-guidelines/>

## Muscle disorders eg Polymyalgia Rheumatica

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=fibromyalgia>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=PMR>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=GCA>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=dermatomyositis>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=myasthenia+gravis>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=muscular+dystrophy>
- Polymyalgia Rheumatica and Giant Cell Arteritis (PMR-GCA) Scotland [www.pmrandgca.org.uk](http://www.pmrandgca.org.uk)

## Osteoarthritis

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=osteoarthritis>

## Osteoporosis

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=osteoporosis>
- [www.nos.org.uk](http://www.nos.org.uk)
- [www.nos.org.uk/health-professionals/osteoporosis-resources-for-primary-care](http://www.nos.org.uk/health-professionals/osteoporosis-resources-for-primary-care)

## **Reactive arthritis**

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=reactive+arthritis>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=viral+arthropathy>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=SLE>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=scleroderma>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=systemic+sclerosis>

## **Calcium homeostasis**

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=osteomalacia>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=rickets>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=Pagets>
- Paget's Association [www.paget.org.uk](http://www.paget.org.uk)

## **Soft / Connective tissue disorders**

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=bursitis>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=epicondylitis>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=achilles+tendon>
- British Sjögren's Syndrome Association [www.bssa.uk.net](http://www.bssa.uk.net)
- Lupus UK [www.lupusuk.org.uk](http://www.lupusuk.org.uk)
- RSI Action (National repetitive strain injury charity) [www.rsiaction.org.uk](http://www.rsiaction.org.uk)
- Scleroderma Society <http://sclerodermauk.org>

## **Spinal disorders**

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=mechanical+back+pain>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=disc+lesion>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=spinal+tumours>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=spinal+infection>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=spinal+stenosis>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=osteochondritis>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=scoliosis>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=kyphosis>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=vertebral+fractures>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=cauda+equina>
- National charity for back health. [www.backcare.org.uk](http://www.backcare.org.uk)

## **Chronic pain**

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=Chronic+painTrauma>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=complex+regional+Chronic+pain>

## **Trauma**

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=first+aid>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=minor+injury>

## **Wounds**

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=wound+management>
- <https://www.nhft.nhs.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93ijm4n1793.pdf&ver=17402>