

PRESS RELEASE

Feasible non-surgical options for management of knee osteoarthritis during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond

(Hong Kong, 19 February 2024) – **Although the official conclusion of the public health crisis caused by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in Hong Kong was announced in mid-2023, the emergence of various viral variants adds an element of uncertainty to whether the pandemic can truly be considered over. A team of orthopaedic specialists from The University of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and Queen Mary Hospital directed their attention towards the valuable insights gained from the pandemic. They proceeded to offer a set of suggestions to individuals suffering from knee osteoarthritis, aiming to enhance their ability to handle this condition through non-surgical means. This proactive approach aims to equip patients with the necessary tools to navigate potential future disruptions to the local healthcare system. Their findings have been published in the *Hong Kong Medical Journal*.**

Clinical services came to a standstill during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Inactivity throughout the pandemic, coupled with changes in health-seeking behaviour and reductions in elective surgeries, has resulted in an exacerbation of pain among patients with knee osteoarthritis. The team believes that the slow disease progression of knee osteoarthritis enables a stepwise treatment approach, beginning with non-surgical methods.

Despite the existence of international non-surgical treatment guidelines for osteoarthritis, adherence to these recommendations by patients in Hong Kong has been impeded by the COVID-19 situation. The non-surgical approaches for knee osteoarthritis discussed in the study considers language barriers, disparities in treatment accessibility, and variations in pandemic regulations. These tools include non-pharmacological treatments, online education programmes, weight reduction, exercise, physiotherapy, use of devices (eg, soft knee braces), drugs (eg, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), and injections (eg, platelet-rich plasma). Although these recommendations are customised for the Hong Kong population, they offer valuable insights that can be applicable to any patient coping with knee osteoarthritis.

The article “Feasible non-surgical options for management of knee osteoarthritis during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond” was published in the *Hong Kong Medical Journal*.
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新聞稿

新冠肺炎疫情期間和後疫情時代膝蓋關節炎的非手術治療選擇

（香港，2024年2月19日）— 雖然香港特區政府已於2023年中宣布新冠肺炎疫情引發的公共衛生危機正式結束，但病毒變異往往會帶來不可預測的後果，新冠病毒或會長期與我們共存。來自香港大學、香港理工大學及瑪麗醫院的骨科專家團隊總結從疫情得到的經驗與教訓，為膝骨關節炎患者提出一系列建議，使他們可採取非手術方法有效管理病情，以便為未來醫療系統作更充分準備。有關建議已在《香港醫學雜誌》發表。

全球新冠肺炎大流行期間臨床服務陷入停滯，而疫情期間很多人都減少了身體活動，加上不少擇期手術受疫情限制而減少，導致膝骨關節炎患者疼痛嚴重加劇。團隊認為，鑒於膝骨關節炎病情惡化相對緩慢，患者可先從非手術方法開始，再逐步進行治療。

儘管骨關節炎的非手術治療方法有國際指引，礙於疫情，香港患者未能跟從指引管理自己的病情。團隊在考慮語言障礙、治療可及性和疫情期間的法規及其差異等因素後，建議了一些治療或紓緩膝骨關節炎的非手術方法，包括非藥物治療、網上教育課程、減重、運動、物理治療、使用裝置（例如軟護膝）及藥物（例如非類固醇類消炎藥），以及注射（例如高濃度血小板血漿）。儘管這些建議是因應香港人口特點而提出，但亦適用於世界各地的所有膝骨關節炎患者。

詳細內容可參閱原文《新冠肺炎疫情期間和後疫情時代治療膝骨關節炎的可行非手術選擇》。

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Source: JR Khoo, PK Chan, C Wen, et al. Feasible non-surgical options for management of knee osteoarthritis during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Hong Kong Med J 2024;30:Epub 19 Feb 2024. <https://doi.org/10.12809/hkmj2210209>.

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