



The effect of sex, age, and time on wrist pain up to 2-years following a distal radius fracture

We wanted to know if different groups of people had different levels of pain after a broken wrist.



What is the problem?

Broken wrists are common injuries. They happen often in young adults because of work and play. They happen in older adults because of bone disease or work and play. We know that younger adults and older adults recover differently from a broken wrist, but we don't know how this breaks down into different age groups, or gender.

We wanted to know if these different groups of people had more, less, or the same amount of pain two years after their broken wrist. We need to know this so we can make sure different groups of people are not dealing with longer lasting pain. Maybe we can help those people recover better from their broken wrist.

How did the team study the problem?

This study used data that had been collected over time at the Hand and Upper Limb Clinic in London, Ontario. There were over 1500 people included in this study. We divided the people in this study into the following age groups: 20-40 years, 41-50 years, 51-65 years, 66-75 years, and greater than 75 years, to try to understand how pain might be different at different stages of life. We then divided the people into males and females. We looked at how they bad they said their pain was at 2, 3, 6, 12, and 24 months after they broke their wrists.

What did the team find?

For everyone in the study, their broken wrists were less painful at every time point. We did notice that people in the age group 51-65 had more broken wrists than any other age group, and that women had more broken wrists than men.

How can this research be used?

Now that we know people in the age group of 51-65 have the most broken wrists, we can plan more studies to try to slow down the number of broke wrists. We think this age group has so many broken wrists because of bone diseases like osteoporosis.

Cautions

It is important to remember that this is only one study. Even though we found that more women and more people in the age group 51-65 had broken wrists, we did not find that they had more pain. Pain is a very complicated thing to understand and a lot of different factors might explain why some people have a lot of pain and some people have very little pain. This study did not look at all of those factors.

Reference: Ziebart, C., MacDermid, J. C., & Suh, N. (2020). Effects of Gender, Age, and Time on Wrist Pain up to Two Years Following Distal Radius Fracture. *Critical Reviews™ in Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine*, 32(2).

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