

The impact of COVID-19 on arthroplasty surgery in the Netherlands and Denmark

Project group

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Summary

As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak between March-April 2020 almost no elective surgeries have been performed in the Netherlands and Denmark, resulting in postponement of numerous arthroplasty procedures. Since mid-May these surgical procedures have been re-started in a stepwise way. According to the “urgentie-lijst- medische-zorg” patients with an indication for an arthroplasty because of osteoarthritis were classified in the least urgent surgical category. As a result the waiting time of these patients is likely to increase even further, which may induce negative effects on outcome. Moreover, although these patients have no life threatening disease, waiting for arthroplasty surgery imposes a large impact on patient’s wellbeing, as well as on the society. The overall burden in terms of disability is substantial: all of these patients have severe pain and serious physical impairments leading to a reduced quality of life. Moreover, the impact of COVID-19 may be different for different patients categories. Frail patients may have to wait even longer as some hospitals re-start elective surgery on low risks patients first. To provide an overview of the impact of COVID-19 on arthroplasty surgery, we will investigate the number of postponed/refrained surgeries in 2020, the indications for primary and revision surgery and their patient characteristics, and its impact on lost quality of life and outcome after surgery (infections, revisions, patient reported outcomes) at international, national and regional level. Furthermore we will assess when/if surgical volumes will return back to the pre-COVID-19 time period and whether the postponed surgeries are being caught up.