



Examining Perceived Risk Factors of Arthritis: Findings from a Public Opinion Survey

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Background

- Little is known about the public's knowledge about modifiable risk factors of arthritis such as obesity, smoking and a sedentary lifestyle^{1, 2}
- Understanding current public perceptions about risk factors for arthritis is important for developing population-level awareness and prevention initiatives

Objective

To describe Canadians' perceptions of risk factors for inflammatory arthritis (IA) and osteoarthritis (OA)

Methods

- ICON* (Improving Cognitive and Joint Health Network) conducted an online public survey between July and August 2014 across Canada, in both English and French
- Participants responded to open-ended questions on what might increase a person's risk of developing IA and OA

Data Analysis

- Content analysis:** 3 researchers independently coded participants' perceived risk factors for IA and OA to create a coding scheme
- Kappa scores** were calculated for each code with 50 random cases with two coders. Codes with kappa scores with less than 0.8 were removed or re-categorized until consensus was reached
- Frequencies** of identified codes were determined

Partner Organizations



* ICON is a team of health researchers and computer scientists who work together to create innovative technologies that will support people to put the best evidence on brain and joint health into action in their everyday lives.

1. Severo M, Gao R, Lucas R, Barros H. Assessment of the general public's knowledge about rheumatic diseases: evidence from a Portuguese population-based survey. BMC musculoskeletal disorders. 2010 Sep 16;11(1):1.
 2. Van Der Wardt EM, Taal E, Rasker JJ. The general public's knowledge and perceptions about rheumatic diseases. Annals of the rheumatic diseases. 2000 Jan 1;59(1):32-8.

Results

1,020 people attempted the survey in English or French, **750** (73.5%) have provided complete responses (500 English; 250 French)

Sample Characteristics (n = 750)	
Female	602 (80.3%)
Living in city with at least one hospital	622 (82.9%)
At least 55 years of age	411 (54.8%)
Responses by Province (Top 3)	
Quebec	256 (34.1%)
Ontario	215 (28.7%)
British Columbia	207 (27.6%)
Employment Status	
Full-time	301 (40.1%)
Part-time	96 (12.8%)
Retired	239 (31.9%)
Not working (due to chronic brain or joint condition)	33 (4.4%)
Self-employed	51 (6.8%)

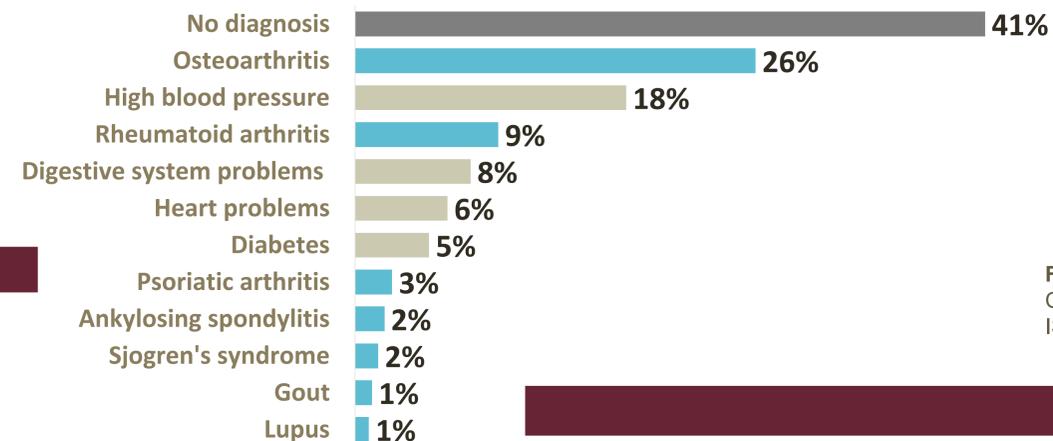


Figure 1: Have you ever been diagnosed with any of the following? Blue bars indicate arthritis

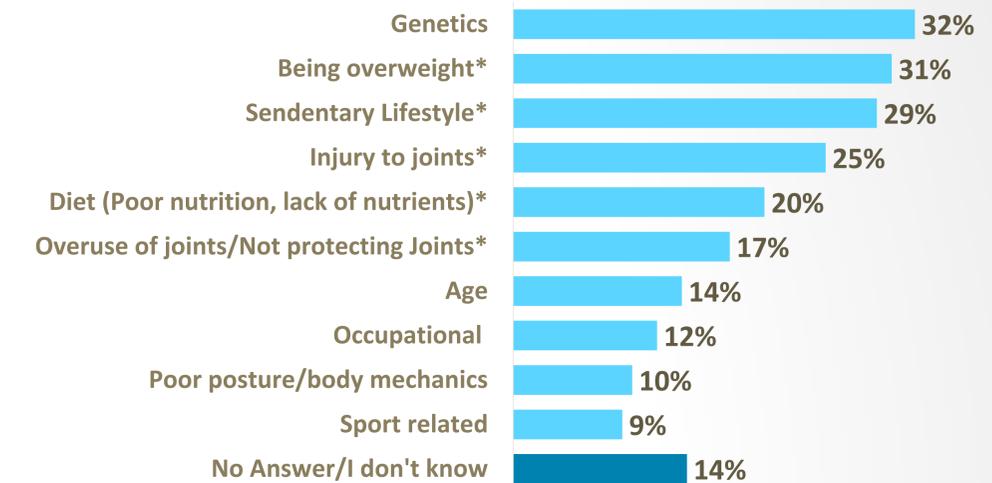


Figure 2: What do you think increases a person's risk of developing osteoarthritis? Columns indicate percentage of total responses. No Answer/I don't know represent responses left blank or 'not known' (dark blue). (*) indicates modifiable risk factors

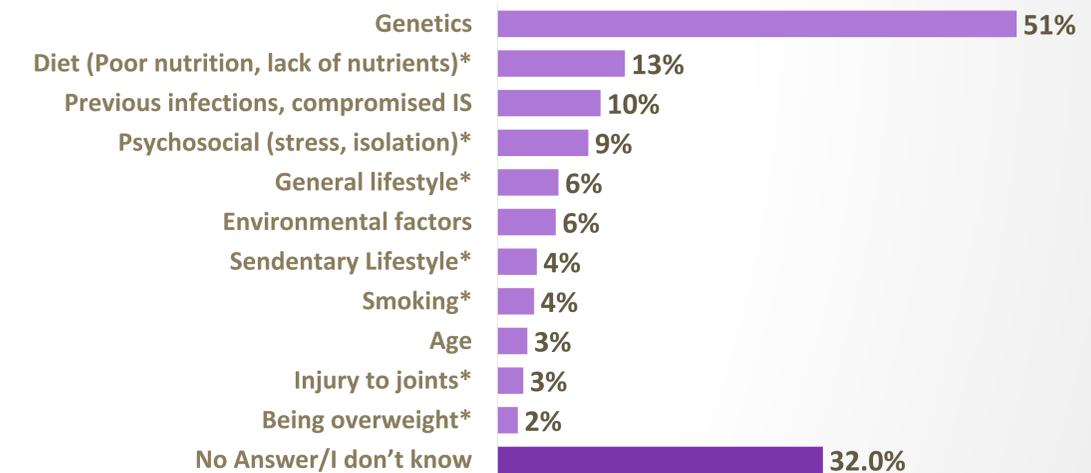


Figure 3: 'What do you think increases a person's risk of developing inflammatory arthritis, such as rheumatoid arthritis?' Columns indicate percentage of total responses. No Answer/I don't know represent responses left blank or 'not known' (dark purple). IS stands for Immune System. (*) corresponds to modifiable risk factors

Conclusion

- More than half of the respondents and over 1 in 3 identified genetics as a risk factors for IA and OA, respectively. In contrast, fewer than 1 in 3 people identified being overweight, sedentary lifestyle or poor dietary choices as risk factors for OA.
- Interestingly, more than 30% of participants did not provide a response to/did not know possible risk factors for IA.
- These findings highlight the need to increase public awareness about modifiable risk factors for arthritis.