NICE National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

Digital technologies for managing mild to moderate hip or knee osteoarthritis: early-value assessment

NICE will assess digital technologies for managing mild to moderate hip or knee osteoarthritis to determine whether they can be recommended for use in the NHS while more evidence is generated, based on the available evidence and potential to be cost-effective and address unmet need in the NHS.

Osteoarthritis is defined as a long-term disorder of synovial joints which occurs when damage triggers repair processes. This leads to structural changes within a joint, with features of localized loss of cartilage, remodelling of adjacent bone and the formation of osteophytes, and mild synovitis (inflammation of the synovial membrane that lines the joint capsule). Osteoarthritis can negatively impact a person's quality of life, affecting their ability to work, socialise and carry out daily tasks. Treatment of osteoarthritis depends on the severity of symptoms. Managing mild to moderate osteoarthritis typically includes information and advice, exercise plans, coping strategies, sleep management, anxiety management and strategies to increase energy. This aims to improve quality of life and control disease progression.

An estimated 10 million people in the UK have osteoarthritis, with over 5 million people affected by knee osteoarthritis, and over 3 million people by hip osteoarthritis (Versus Arthritis, 2024). It is one of the UK's main causes of disability. In 2018, the management of musculoskeletal conditions cost the NHS and healthcare system over £10 billion, which is estimated to reach £118.6 billion over the following decade. Digital technologies for managing mild to moderate hip or knee osteoarthritis may be able to increase access to musculoskeletal services, reduce treatment waiting times and reduce the burden on wider healthcare services.

The NICE early value assessment will evaluate innovative digital technologies for managing mild to moderate hip or knee osteoarthritis. It will review the evidence that is available and assess the potential clinical and cost-effectiveness of the technologies, as well as identifying evidence gaps to help direct evidence generation.