Outcomes of General Practice Management of Osteoarthritis

Abstract:

Introduction: An educational audit approved as an active learning module by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners was produced by Genesis Ed. The aim was to measure a change in pain, strength and function for patients with arthritis of a major joint presenting to general practitioners.

Method: The audit was based on the MOOT (Measuring Outcome Of Therapy) audit of the RACGP NSW Projects, Research and Development Unit. General practitioners were each required to apply it to 10 patients with osteoarthritis and determine outcome by change in patient symptoms at the next consultation. Patients were identified by the GP and follow up was part of usual care. The outcome measures were those of pain, strength and function, all on a scale of 10.

Results: The audit commenced in March 2005, and results to date are based on the first 660 patients, involving 66 GPs. Follow up occurred in most cases within expected time lines. Improvement was noted for 72% of patients, with severe pain decreasing from 39% to 11% of patients, good strength increasing from 19% to 38%, and good function from 16% to 45%.

Discussion: The audit was acceptable to the GPs and their patients, and there was a significant improvement in patient outcomes when measured at the next consultation.