

Original

**THE EFFECT OF LOW INCIDENCE OF PRIMARY OSTEOARTHRITIS
OF THE HIP ON THE VOLUME AND
NATURE OF JOINT REPLACEMENT SURGERY**

Husham A Hasan, FRCS* Zuhair M Elsayed, MB BCh*
Walid M Othman, FRCS (Ed)* Faris A Hasan, MB ChB*

Of the 5,330 routine operations performed in a general orthopaedic theatre in central Saudi Arabia between 1988-1993, only 68 total hip replacements were done. Osteo-arthritis was not the most common indication and the majority of patients were below 60 years of age, indicating that the possibility of future revision is high.

This paper studies the practical consequences of the low incidence of hip osteoarthritis in Saudi Arabia and makes the suggestion that total hip replacements and revision arthroplasties should be confined to a limited number of hospitals.

Total hip replacement is one of the most frequently performed major orthopaedic procedures and the most common indication for this operation is osteoarthritis¹. Large numbers of these operations are done every year in Europe and North America. However, among many non-European communities, such as South African Negroes², Hong Kong Chinese^{3,4}, Indians⁵, and Nigerians⁶, the incidence of osteoarthritis of the hip is reported to be low. In Saudi Arabia, Agunwa⁷ found a striking absence of osteoarthritis of the hip in his clinic in Jeddah.

The purpose of this paper is to study the proportionate frequency of total hip replacement in relation to the workload of an orthopaedic unit in a general hospital in central Saudi Arabia. This is an important step towards assessing whether or not it is necessary to structure every orthopaedic theatre on the general model i.e. to expect large numbers of total hip replacements.