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**The Prevalence of Arthritis as a Heartrending Peril to the Aged:  
An Assessment of the Dependable Remedies and Treatment**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Arthritis is a term often used to mean any disorder that affects the joints. Symptoms generally include joint pain and stiffness. Other symptoms may include redness, warmth, swelling, and a decreased range of motion of the affected joints. A joint is where two or more bones come together, such as the hip or knee. Arthritis is a general term, derived from the Greek words arthro-meaning "joint," and -itis, meaning "inflammation," which literally means joint inflammation. It is a condition that affects joints, the tissues that surround the joints, and other connective tissue. It can cause pain and inflammation, making it difficult to move or stay active. It was on this basis that the paper concluded that arthritis is a disease that affects the joints. Joint disease is the most common form of arthritis, affecting nearly one-third of people over age 65. It is characterised by joint pain and mild inflammation due to deterioration of the articular cartilage that normally cushions joints. Arthritis causes disabilities among adults, including depression and effects on the musculoskeletal system. One of the recommendations was that individuals, specifically adults, should be engaged in regular exercise to keep the body, bones, and joints active and healthy.*

**KEYWORDS: Arthritis, Heartrending Peril, Aged, Remedies and Treatment**

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**Introduction**

Ageing and the ageing process are part and parcel of human experience. As each day passes, a person becomes one day older, and the older a person becomes, the nearer he or she draws closer to the stage in which biological deterioration of biological tissues becomes more evident (Ayoade, 2012). As a corollary, ageing as a natural process is inevitable. Indeed, ageing well, socially speaking, means having had a saving strategy to face socioeconomic and health challenges that may manifest later in life. Changes in the body due to ageing can result in loss of muscle mass, changes in balance, and other factors that impact day-to-day functions. Overcoming these changes necessitates a well-planned strategy, preventive measures, and some commendable common sense applications to various contexts (Stibch, 2010). Successful ageing may be viewed as an interdisciplinary concept spanning both psychology and sociology, where it is seen as the transaction between society and individuals across the life

span, with a specific focus on the later years of life. A healthy lifestyle can cut the risk of heart disease by up to 80% (Skamulis, 2006).

Arthritis is a term often used to mean any disorder that affects the joints. Symptoms generally include joint pain and stiffness. Other symptoms may include redness, warmth, swelling, and a decreased range of motion of the affected joints. In some types of arthritis, other organs are also affected (Pirota, 2010). Onset can be gradual or sudden. There are over 100 types of arthritis. The most common forms are osteoarthritis (degenerative joint disease) and rheumatoid arthritis. Osteoarthritis usually occurs with age and affects the fingers, knees, and hips. Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disorder that often affects the hands and feet. Other types include gout, lupus, fibromyalgia, and septic arthritis. They are all types of rheumatic disease. Treatment may include resting the joint and alternating between applying ice and heat. Weight loss and exercise may also be useful. Recommended medications may depend on the form of arthritis. These may include pain medications such as ibuprofen and paracetamol (acetaminophen). In some circumstances, a joint replacement may be useful. Arthritis is a common reason that people miss work and can result in a decreased quality of life (VanItallie, 2010).

### **Concept of Arthritis**

Arthritis is a term often used to mean any disorder that affects the joints. A joint is where two or more bones come together, such as the hip or knee. Arthritis is a general term, derived from the Greek words arthro-meaning "joint," and -itis, meaning "inflammation." which literally means joint inflammation. It is a condition that affects joints, the tissues that surround the joint, and other connective tissue. It can cause pain and inflammation, making it difficult to move or stay active. There are many types of arthritis. Each form causes different symptoms and may need different treatments (Cleveland Clinic, 2021). While arthritis usually affects older adults, it can develop in men, women, and children of any age. It is a rheumatic condition. Rheumatic conditions tend to involve pain, aching, stiffness, and swelling in and around one or more joints. Other organs are also affected in some types of arthritis. Onset can be gradual or sudden (National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, 2016).

The most common form of arthritis is osteoarthritis. Other common rheumatic conditions related to arthritis include gout, fibromyalgia, and rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Rheumatic conditions tend to involve pain, aching, stiffness, and swelling in and around one or more joints. Certain rheumatic conditions can also involve the immune system and various internal organs of the body (Nichols, 2017). Some forms of arthritis can affect multiple organs and cause widespread symptoms. Arthritis can be a major cause of disability, specifically for adults. Joint disease is the most common form of arthritis, affecting nearly one-third of people over age 65. It is characterised by joint pain and mild inflammation due to deterioration of the articular cartilage that normally cushions joints. Joint pain is gradual in onset, typically occurring after prolonged activity, and is typically deep and achy in nature. One or multiple joints may be affected, predominantly involving the knee, hips, spine, and fingers. Increased age, obesity, certain genetic factors and occupations, and hobbies or sports that result in excessive joint stress can result in cartilaginous changes leading to osteoarthritis (Keller, Shen & Samartzis, 2021). Damage begins with the development of small cracks in the cartilage that are

perpendicular to the joint. Arthritis is most common in the following areas of the body: feet, hands, hips, knees, and lower back.

### **Causes of Arthritis in the Aged**

According to NIAMS (2016) there are various causes of arthritis such as follows:

**Age.** The older you are, the more chance there is of you developing the condition.

**Infection.** Bacteria, viruses, or fungi can infect joints and trigger inflammation.

**Joint Injury:** If you have suffered from joint-related injuries in the past, or if you are overusing your joint too soon after an injury, you could be putting yourself at risk. It is important to rest after surgery and give injuries time to heal.

**Joint Pressure:** High-intensity, physically demanding jobs can put too much pressure on your joints. This can be one of the causes of arthritis.

**Secondary Arthritis:** Osteoarthritis may occur in joints which have already been affected by other conditions such as gout or rheumatoid arthritis.

**Obesity:** Carrying extra weight puts extra pressure and stress on your joints, particularly your knees and hips, which we know can be one of the causes of arthritis. It's important therefore to try and live a healthy lifestyle and to stick to a balanced diet.

**Genes/ Family History:** Osteoarthritis runs in families, although studies have not yet identified a single gene that is responsible for this. However, the risk of inheriting rheumatoid arthritis is still considered to be quite low.

**Gender:** Women are more likely than men to develop osteoarthritis

**Hormones.** Rheumatoid arthritis affects three times more women than men. This may be because of the hormone oestrogen.

**Smoking:** As with several long-term medical conditions, one of the biggest risk factors is smoking.

**Diet.** Some reports have suggested that eating too much red meat and not consuming enough vitamin C can contribute to the causes of arthritis

**Work.** Some jobs that use repetitive movements/sedentary work or heavy lifting can stress the joints or cause an injury, which can lead to arthritis, particularly osteoarthritis. For example, if you need to do a lot of knee bends and squats at work, you might be more likely to get osteoarthritis.

### **Types of Arthritis in the Aged**

There are various types of arthritis but the most common ones are as follows:

**Rheumatoid arthritis (RA):** RA is a disorder in which the body's own immune system starts to attack body tissues (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). It is a long-term

autoimmune disorder that primarily affects the joints. It typically results in warm, swollen, and painful joints. Stiffness and pain frequently worsen after rest. Most commonly, the wrist and hands are involved, with the same joints typically involved on both sides of the body. The disease may also affect other parts of the body, including skin, eyes, lungs, heart, nerves, and blood (NIAMS, 2014). This may result in a low red blood cell count, inflammation around the lungs, and inflammation around the heart. Fever and low energy may also be present. Often, symptoms come on gradually over weeks to months and can lead to severe deformity in a few years if not treated (Geraci, 2007).

**Osteoarthritis arthritis (OA):** This is the most common form of arthritis. It is a type of degenerative joint disease that results from the breakdown of joint cartilage and underlying bone. The most common symptoms are joint pain and stiffness (VanItallie, 2010). Usually, the symptoms progress slowly over a year. Initially, they may occur only after exercise, but can become constant over time. Other symptoms may include joint swelling, decreased range of motion, and, when the back is affected, weakness or numbness of the arms and legs. The most commonly involved joints are the two near the ends of the fingers and the joint at the base of the thumbs; the knee and hip joints; and the joints of the neck and lower back. Joints on one side of the body are often more affected than those on the other. The symptoms can interfere with work and normal daily activities. Unlike some other types of arthritis, only the joints, not internal organs, are affected (Arden et al., 2015).

**Psoriatic arthritis(PA):** PA is a long-term inflammatory arthritis that occurs in people affected by the autoimmune disease psoriasis (Freedbreg & Fitzpatrick, 2003). The classic feature of psoriatic arthritis is the swelling of entire fingers and toes with a sausage-like appearance (James, Berger, & Elston, 2005). This often happens in association with changes to the nails, such as small depressions in the nail (pitting), thickening of the nails, and detachment of the nail from the nailbed. Skin changes consistent with psoriasis (e.g., red, scaly, and itchy plaques) frequently occur before the onset of psoriatic arthritis, but psoriatic arthritis can precede the rash in 15% of affected individuals. It is classified as a type of seronegative spondyloarthropathy (Richlin, Colbert & Gladman, 2017).

### **Effect of Arthritis to the Aged**

**Loss of ability:** Arthritis causes loss of the ability to perform basic functional tasks such as activities of daily living (ADLs) or walk short distances. This ability increases markedly with age. When elderly people lose their independence in performing these tasks, they lose the ability to live alone and must be dependent on caregivers or live in a long-term care setting (Covinsky 2003).

**Disability in elderly people:** Evidence for this comes from cross-sectional studies which demonstrate that elderly people with arthritis are much more likely to have limitations in mobility. Studies also show that elderly people with arthritis are more likely to develop new disabilities, mostly work disability, for several years (Yelin 2005).

**Depression:** Many seniors who suffer from arthritis also suffer from depression. Arthritis can lead to a loss of mobility, which in turn can lead to a loss of feelings of independence. It is a disease that takes a physical and mental toll on a person (Swavely 2020).

***Effect on musculoskeletal system:*** As we age, the balance between absorption and formation changes, leading to bone loss. Our bones become less dense and more fragile. The composition and properties of cartilage change as well (Verywellhealth, 2022). There is less water content in cartilage as we age, reducing its ability to cushion and absorb shock. Cartilage also goes through a degenerative process, which is when arthritis can develop. Ligaments and other connective tissues become less elastic and flexible with age. Because of the changes that occur within the musculoskeletal system as we age, our joints typically develop a decreased range of motion. As cartilage breaks down, joints may become inflamed and painful.

***Other effect includes:***

- ✓ Sleep limitation
- ✓ Joint pain
- ✓ Fatigue

### **Remedies of Arthritis in the Aged**

**Manage your weight:** Your weight can have a big impact on your arthritis symptoms. Extra weight puts more pressure on your joints, especially your knees, hips, and feet. Guidelines from the American College of Rheumatology and Arthritis Foundation (ACR/AF) strongly recommend losing weight if you have osteoarthritis arthritis (OA), overweight or obese.

***Reducing the stress on your joints by losing weight can help:***

- Improve your mobility
- Decrease pain
- Prevent future damage to your joints

**Exercise:** If you have arthritis, exercise can help manage your weight, keep your joints flexible, and strengthen the muscles around your joints, which offers more support. Current guidelines strongly recommend starting an appropriate exercise program. Exercising with a trainer or another person may be especially beneficial, as it increases motivation.

Good options include low-impact exercises, such as:

- Walking
- Cycling
- Tai chi
- Water activities
- Swimming

**Healthy diet:** A diet that's rich in fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole foods can help boost your immune system and your overall health. There's some evidence that dietary choices can affect people with both rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis. A plant-based diet provides antioxidants, which can help reduce inflammation by eliminating free radicals from the body. On the other hand, a diet rich in red meat, processed foods, saturated fat, and added sugar and salt may aggravate inflammation, which is a characteristic of arthritis (Ellis, 2020). These foods can also contribute to other health conditions, including obesity, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart disease, and other complications, so they're likely not beneficial for people with

arthritis. Current OA guidelines do not recommend taking vitamin D or fish oil supplements as a treatment, but consuming foods containing these nutrients as part of a balanced diet may contribute to overall well-being.

**Medication:** There are several types of medications that are used for the treatment of arthritis. Treatment typically begins with medications that have the fewest side effects, with further medications being added if insufficiently effective (Baluni, 2014). Depending on the type of arthritis, the medications that are given may be different.

*Some examples of medications include:*

- Analgesics for pain control, such as acetaminophen
- NSAIDs, such as aspirin and ibuprofen
- Corticosteroids, which reduce inflammation
- Disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs), which slow or stop inflammation but weaken the immune system
- Targeted DMARDs, which target specific inflammatory issues rather than suppressing the entire immune system

## **Conclusion**

The study concludes that arthritis is a disease that affects the joints. Joint disease is the most common form of arthritis, affecting nearly one-third of people over age 65. It is characterised by joint pain and mild inflammation due to deterioration of the articular cartilage that normally cushions joints. Joint pain is gradual in onset, typically occurring after prolonged activity, and is typically deep and achy in nature. Arthritis causes disabilities among adults, including depression and effects on the musculoskeletal system.

## **Recommendations**

1. Individuals, specifically adults, should be engaged in regular exercise to keep the body, bones, and joints active and healthy.
2. Aged individuals as well as the young ones should visit the hospital regularly for checkup to know their health status, including and get treatment where it is necessary.
3. The aged should avoid jobs that involves repetitive movement of the body/ hectic and stressful jobs.
4. Individuals should intake a well-balanced meal at all times to enable the body fight against bacterium that may lead to arthritis.

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