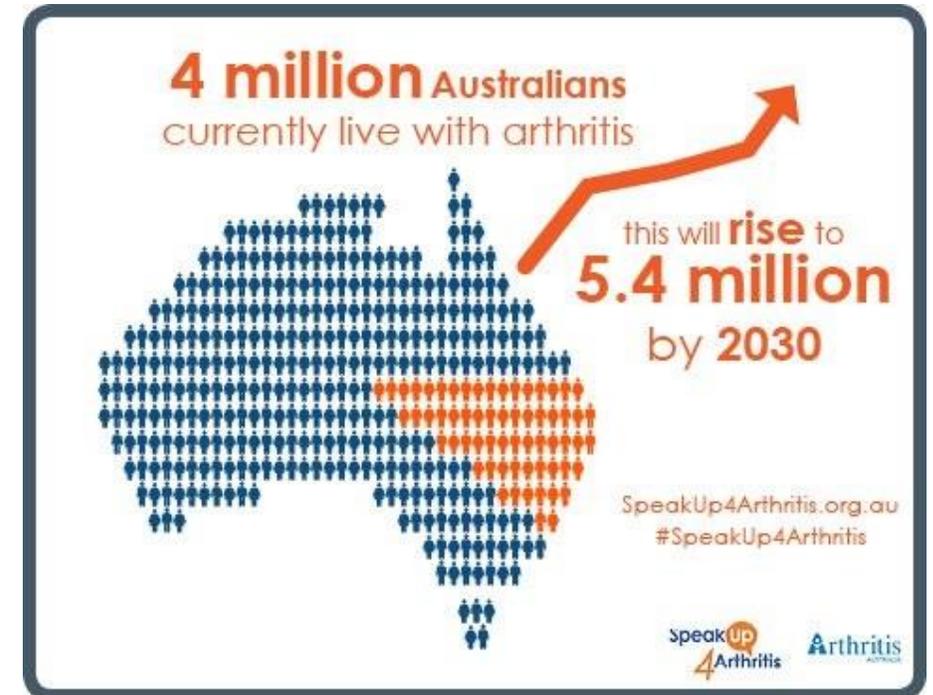


Rheumatology in Primary Care – An Update for GPs

What is Arthritis?

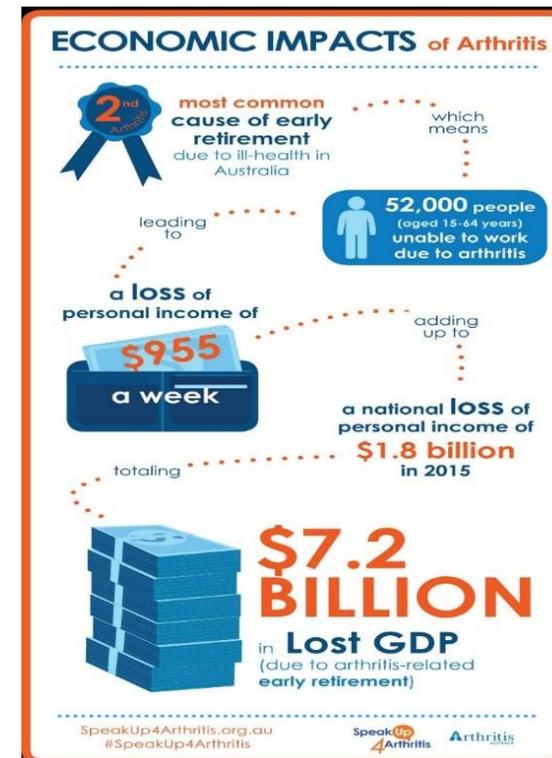
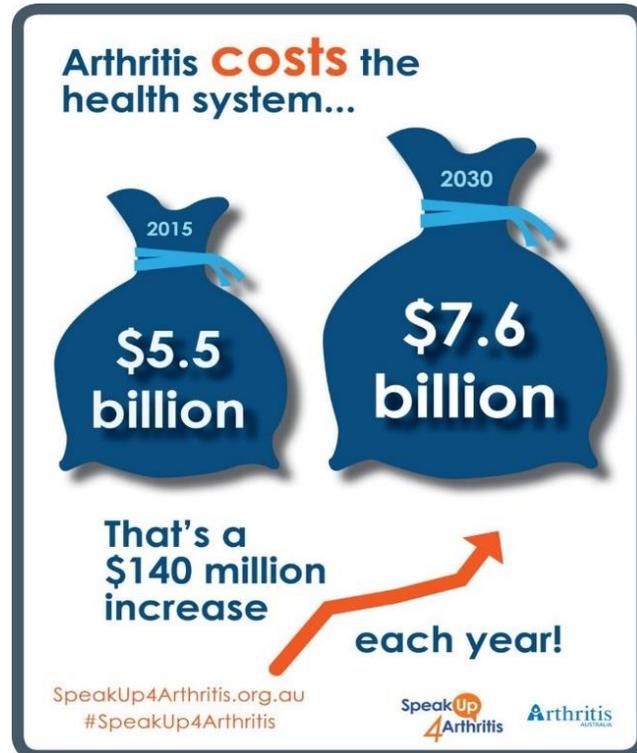
- “Arthros” = Joint
- “itis” = Inflammation
- It is not a single disease.
- It is an umbrella term for over 100 musculoskeletal conditions affecting joints, most of which have no cure.
- Approx. 4 Million Australians are living with arthritis.
 - 2.4 million of working age or younger.
 - Including 6,500 children, under 16 years old.



The Burden

Arthritis has many impacts outside the joint:

- Social impacts
- Emotional impacts
- Economic impacts



The Burden of Arthritis



Arthritis is one of the most common chronic diseases in Australia

- The majority of those affected are of working age or younger, including 6,500 children under the age of 18 years
- People with arthritis report themselves have having poorer general health compared to those without arthritis
- People with arthritis tend to suffer from multiple co-morbidities
 - 48% of people with arthritis have cardiovascular disease
 - 33% of people with arthritis have back pain
 - 27% of people with arthritis have a mental health or emotional health condition

The Burden of Arthritis



Arthritis is one of the most common chronic diseases in Queensland

- Over 600,000 Queenslanders suffer from a form of arthritis

Arthritis is a costly disease

- Arthritis costs the health system \$5.5 billion annually
- It is a significant cause of early retirement, often resulting in a huge drop in personal income annually

Arthritis is expensive to treat

- Requires ongoing medical and allied health care
- More than half of the top ten most expensive medications in Australia are used to treat arthritis

Managing Your Arthritis

Accurate diagnosis is key

- Physical examination
- History
- Blood tests
- Scans

Working with your healthcare team

- GP and rheumatologist
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Podiatrists
- Exercise Physiologists
- Dietitians
- Psychologists
- Social Workers
- Pharmacists



NICE Guidelines – Rheumatoid arthritis in adults: management



1.2 Communication and education

1.2.1.2 Offer verbal and written information to people with RA to:

- improve their understanding of the condition and its management, and
- counter any misconceptions they may have.

1.2.1.3 People with RA who wish to know more about their disease and its management should be offered the opportunity to take part in existing educational activities, including self-management programmes, ideally within 1 month of diagnosis.

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg79/chapter/Recommendations#referral-diagnosis-and-investigations>

Arthritis Queensland



Information

- Arthritis Information Line
- Arthritis resources
- Presentations and events

Education

- Self-management courses (general and condition specific)
- Community seminars
- Health professionals in-services and seminars

Support

- Health service navigation
- Regional support groups
- Online support

Awareness

- Campaigns
- Communications

Advocacy

- Stakeholder engagement
- Committees and working groups
- Contributions to policies and working papers
- Consumer-led advocacy

Research

- Financial support