

Evidence based musculo-skeletal treatment

Lars Lidgren, MD, Professor

Dept of Orthopedics, Lund University Hospital, SE-221 85 Lund, Sweden

The importance of quality assurance for evaluating the treatment of musculo-skeletal disorders became obvious in the 70-ies when the new "joint implants" were rapidly introduced and the operations widely spread. The first multi-center register with standardized follow-up were started in Switzerland by Maurice Müller, on hip arthroplasty, and in Sweden Göran Bauer on knee arthroplasty in the mid 70-ies www.ort.lu.se/knee, www.jru.orthop.gu.se. It took almost 25 years before central documentation in joint registries were regarded as feasible and accepted among orthopedic surgeons. It is now becoming imperative that orthopedic surgeons have evidence-based information on techniques, materials and risk factors on joint implants in non-selected clinics in a general population.

At the moment implant registers have been developed in a number of countries like United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Canada and it is on its way in several other countries. A joint register is now initiated by the National Institute of Health in Italy. A consensus has however still not been reached in many major countries on mandatory and even voluntary participation.

One of the major goals for the Bone and Joint Decade is to deliver effective treatment for muscular-skeletal disorder using validated outcome instruments www.boneandjointdecade.org. This will be possible by using evidence which is based on multicenter approaches for following surgical procedures.

The European council has recently decided to give financial support for two major projects:

- 1) to agree on common indicators for the treatment given by muscular skeletal specialities
- 2) to catalogue and evaluate existing guidelines and give strict recommendations for implementation and adherence.

This will serve as a base for evaluating treatment of musculo-skeletal disorders.

There are now technical, net based solutions for submitting real time information with immediate feedback. At the moment there are three major European initiatives based on submission of data on joint implants by the net originating from Germany, Sweden and Switzerland.

This meeting on evidence based treatment in orthopedics should only be the first in a row followed by similar initiatives.