

Introduction

The musculo-skeletal conditions are among the most frequently occurring medical conditions with substantial influence on health, quality of life and use of health care resources. The ultimate goal for this ten-year project is to raise awareness of the impact on society associated with musculo-skeletal disorders and thereby improving the care of the patients by securing the economic resources for health care and research in this area.

The objective of this consensus meeting was to create a consensus document describing the problem, current treatment options and to delineate future perspectives regarding treatment of and research on musculo-skeletal disorders and injuries. An additional objective of this particular consensus meeting was to draft an action plan to deliver the objectives of a global ten-year campaign—the Bone and Joint Decade.

A consensus meeting is equivalent to a scientific hearing with the objective of clarifying the usefulness of current diagnostic and treatment methods with regards to effectiveness and safety in relation to social and economic effects for the individual and for society. Furthermore, future developments should be addressed. Most of the information was conveyed by the

experts in their written and oral presentations. However, in addition they had access to medical databases such as Medline and Cochrane.

After one day of presentations by experts in the relevant fields and discussion by a knowledgeable audience, an independent consensus panel composed of specialists from the fields of orthopedic surgery, epidemiology, rehabilitation and physical medicine, biomechanics and biomaterials, geriatrics, rheumatology, as well as a public representative, weighed the scientific evidence and formulated a consensus statement in response to the following previously stated questions:

- A) Where do we stand today?
- B) Future perspectives.
 1. What epidemiological changes can be expected during the decade?
 2. What are the new diagnostic approaches?
 3. Which are the feasible preventive measures?
 4. What are the expected therapeutic developments?
 5. What are the most productive directions for future research, specific goals or bullet areas?