Diagnosis & Treatment of Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis (OA) most often affects the knees, hips, hands, first carpometacarpal joint, and proximal and distal interphalangeal joints, and the remaining major joints of the great toes. OA is a highly symptomatic and physically disabling condition, but a great deal of progress has been made in understanding and treating the condition.

## Testing & imaging not needed

- **Physical therapy** (PT)
- **Level of pain and function**
- **Functional limitation**
- **Weight loss** in patients with OA

Inflammatory or noninflammatory arthritis must be ruled out before patients are offered appropriate OA management. This principle is important in any patient with OA and should be reviewed before the patient is started on pharmacologic therapies.

### Clinical Features

- **Symptoms**
  - **Insidious onset**
  - **Activity-related pain**
  - **Rapid onset**
  - **Brief morning stiffness**
  - **Age >45 years**

- **Signs**
  - **Swelling**
  - **Redness**
  - **Warmth**

### Arthritis Care Resolutions

- **Radiographic findings suggestive of OA**
  - **Joint-space narrowing**
  - **Erosive changes (seen in primary bone tumors or metastatic tumors)**
  - **Sclerosis**
  - **Osteonecrosis**
  - **Fracture**
  - **Osteophytes**

### Evaluation

- **Antinuclear antibody**
- **Rheumatoid factor**
- **Anti-CCP antibody**
- **Sedimentation rate**
- **C-reactive protein**
- **markers for ligament rupture or synovitis**
- **Immunoglobulin**
- **Immunoglobulin G (IgG)**

### Treatment

- **Acetaminophen**
- **Duloxetine**
- **Topical capsaicin**
- **Fish oil**
- **Chondroitin**
- **Glucosamine–chondroitin**
- **Oral glucocorticoids**

### Consider Imaging and Specialist Referral

- **Diagnostic imaging**
  - **Plain film**
  - **CT or MRI in specific cases**

### Consider the Following: Second-line Pharmacologic Therapies

- **Biologics**
- **Sulfasalazine**
- **Hydroxychloroquine**
- **Prednisone**

### Consider the Following: Second-line pharmacologic therapies

- **Glucocorticoid injections**
- **Surgical options**

### Consider the following: First-line pharmacologic therapies

- **Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)**

### Consider Reimbursement

- **Insurance company guidelines**

### Consider the following: First-line pharmacologic therapies

- **Physical therapy**
- **Assistive devices**

### Consider the following: First-line pharmacologic therapies

- **Exercise**
  - **Land- or water-based exercises**
  - **Biomechanical realignment**
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**References**