

# Wrist fractures have an important public health impact

July 8 2010

---

Wrist fractures have an important personal and public health impact and may play a role in the development of disability in older people, according to a new study published in the British Medical Journal today.

Wrist fractures are the most common upper extremity fractures in [older adults](#) and can affect everyday tasks like carrying heavy objects, opening doors, cutting food, pouring liquid, turning the key, and getting out of a chair. But their precise impact on functional decline (ability to carry out usual daily activities) has not been well studied.

So a team of US researchers set out to quantify the clinical impact of wrist fractures in a group of older women.

They identified 6,107 healthy women, aged 65 years and older, without prior wrist or hip fracture. Five activities of daily living were used as a measure of functional decline (meal preparation, heavy housekeeping, ability to climb 10 stairs, shopping, and getting out of a car). Participants were examined approximately every two years for an average of 7.6 years.

During the study period, 268 women had a wrist fracture. These women were approximately 50% more likely to experience clinically important functional decline compared to women without a wrist fracture, even after accounting for demographic, health and lifestyle factors.

In fact, the effect of a wrist fracture on functional decline was clinically

as significant as other established risk factors such as falls, diabetes and arthritis.

"Our findings highlight the personal, public health, and policy implications of wrist fractures," say the authors.

They call for greater public health awareness of the impact of wrist fractures, including measures to prevent wrist fractures and prompt rehabilitation after a wrist fracture to help improve recovery.

Provided by British Medical Journal

Citation: Wrist fractures have an important public health impact (2010, July 8) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-07-wrist-fractures-important-health-impact.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--