

# Foot, knee and hip pain a problem in obese children

October 16 2012

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feet, ankles, knees and hips - contributes to both poor physical function and a reduced quality of life in obese children, according to a new study by Dr. Sharon Bout-Tabaku and colleagues, from Nationwide Children's Hospital and The Ohio State University in the US. Their work shows that obese children with lower extremity pain have worse physical function and poorer psychological health than obese children without lower extremity pain. Their findings appear online in *Clinical Orthopaedics and Related Research®*, published by Springer.

Obese children show diminished function, reduced psychosocial health (emotional, social and school functioning), and lower [physical fitness](#) compared with healthy weight peers. For these children, pain in the lower extremities is more common than pain in the upper extremities and back. However, it remains unclear whether pain interferes with physical fitness or [physical activity levels](#) in obese children.

The researchers examined the medical charts of 175 obese children; of those, 51 reported lower extremity pain while 124 had no pain. The medical records included data on age, sex, race, puberty stage, lower extremity pain, physical function, psychosocial health and physical fitness.

Although poor physical fitness was not related to having pain, children who reported lower extremity pain scored lower on physical function and psychosocial health than those who felt no pain. In addition, as the severity of obesity increased, there was a progressive decline in physical

function, psychosocial health and fitness scores among those who reported lower extremity pain.

The authors conclude: "Our findings support the importance of investigating lower extremity pain as part of the evaluation and management of obese children. Lower extremity pain may play a role in reduced compliance with weight management programs, exercise regimes, or physical activity recommendations for [obese children](#)."

**More information:** Bout-Tabaku S et al (2012). Lower extremity pain is associated with reduced function and psychosocial health in obese children. *Clinical Orthopaedics and Related Research*; DOI [10.1007/s11999-012-2620-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11999-012-2620-0)

Provided by Springer

Citation: Foot, knee and hip pain a problem in obese children (2012, October 16) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-10-foot-knee-hip-pain-problem.html>

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