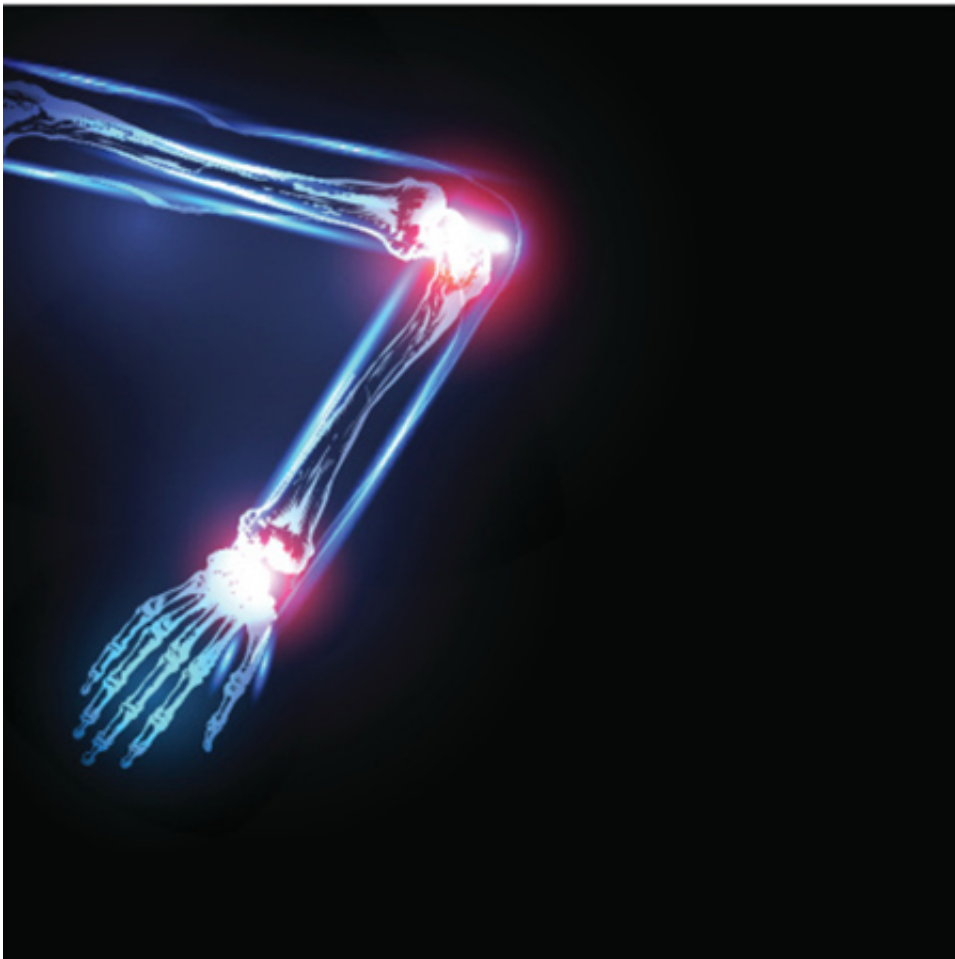


Indians with arthritis have increased risk of heart disease

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Indian patients with rheumatoid arthritis face a greater risk of developing cardiovascular disease than those in Europe or the USA.

(Medical Xpress)—Research at the University of Liverpool and the AB

Rheumatology Clinic, Hyderabad, has shown that Indian people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) are four times more likely to develop cardiovascular disease.

The study, which was conducted with 800 RA patients over four years, showed that women with the condition were at particular risk of developing heart disease. Women tend to be at a higher risk of RA compared to men and it is thought that this might be linked to changes in hormones. The condition improves in women post-pregnancy and during the menopause.

Risk factors

Researchers found that [risk factors](#) such as hypertension and diabetes were highly prevalent in the population and together with RA, increased the chances of developing a heart condition at an early age.

The number of patients with RA is broadly similar to US and European countries, but those at risk of developing [cardiovascular disease](#) in India are much higher.

It is still uncertain why people in India are at a higher risk of getting the condition, but the research highlights that increased measures for reducing obesity and providing early interventions in cases of diabetes and hypertension, could lower the number of RA patients developing [heart problems](#).

Professor Robert Moots, from the University's Institute of Ageing and Chronic Disease, said: "These findings are surprising and it is important that patients with [rheumatoid arthritis](#) in India and South Asia are aware of the risk factors that contribute to the disease. Arthritis needs expert treatment for the duration of a person's lifetime and specialist lifestyle support, such as [maintaining a healthy weight](#) and getting regular blood

pressure tests.

Healthy lifestyle

"There is no particular reason why, given the expertise that we have in this area, that Indian people should be at any higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease than any other RA patient in the world, but there are clearly factors here that need our attention, such as genetic possibilities or environmental factors.

"Maintaining an overall [healthy lifestyle](#) and seeing a specialist regularly are certainly the first steps in preventing the number of cases of heart disease increasing in the country."

Provided by University of Liverpool

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