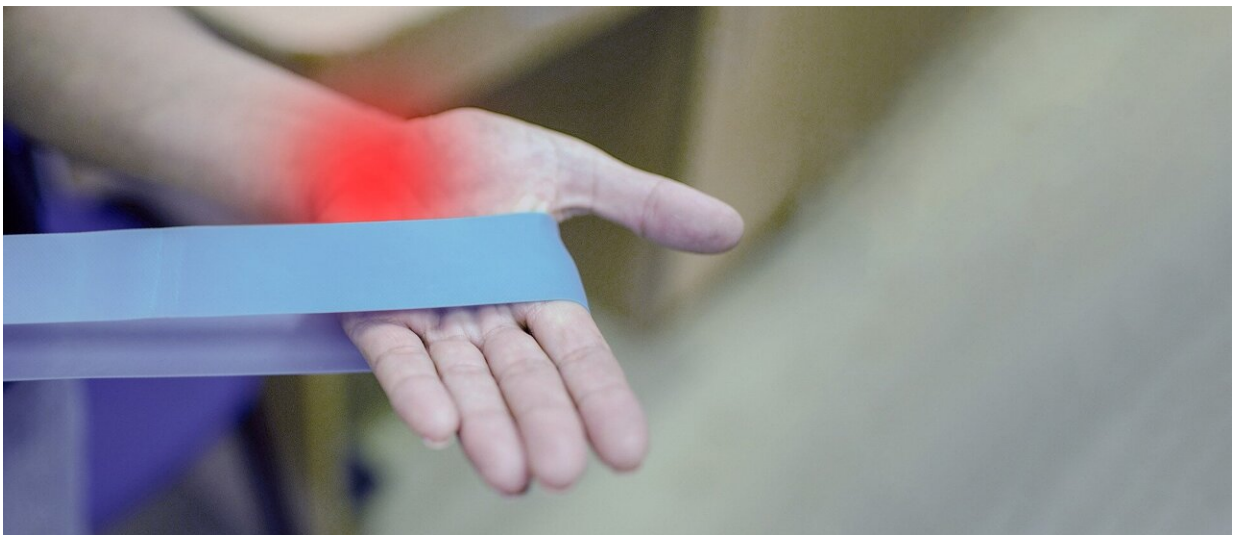


# Study forecasts as many as 1.06 billion people with 'other' musculoskeletal disorders by 2050

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A category of musculoskeletal disorders of our joints, muscles, bones, ligaments, tendons, and spine are on the rise, and a new forecast is as many as 1.06 billion people—up from 464 million—will be living with related disabilities by 2050, placing even greater pressure on stretched health care systems.

Published in the [latest edition](#) of *Lancet Rheumatology*, the Global

Burden of Disease research used population, health, and insurance claims data across 204 countries and territories to measure the prevalence, years of life lived with disability, and [population data](#) to identify the 2050 projection.

"We highlight there is a substantial burden of what are categorized as 'other' [musculoskeletal disorders](#) that would otherwise go unrecognized," says joint first author Manasi Murthy Mittinty, Flinders University College of Medicine and Public Health Senior Lecturer and Harvard Medical School Advanced Global Clinical Scholar Research Fellow.

"The research team has identified that musculoskeletal disorders of the types studied in this research, which excludes osteoarthritis, [rheumatoid arthritis](#), gout, [low back pain](#), and neck pain, are a large and growing source of disability in the world that requires public policy consideration," she says.

"We based our forecast on population projections and aging demographics, indicating that not only are the number of people worldwide living with other musculoskeletal conditions such as [systemic lupus erythematosus](#) and spondylopathies increasing but so will be their health care needs in 2050 and beyond."

The research team identified:

- 'Other' musculoskeletal disorders are a heterogeneous group of musculoskeletal conditions not captured elsewhere in disease-specific categories and are often overlooked in policy for musculoskeletal health;
- 'Other' musculoskeletal disorders in 2020 ranked as the sixth-largest cause of years lived with disability (YLDs), 19th-largest cause of DALYs (Disability Adjusted Life years (DALYs);
- Large YLD burden, despite all uncertainty, suggests high demand

for therapeutic and rehabilitative services and is supported by insurance claims data indicating large number of health service visits.

Dr. Mittinty says the research found musculoskeletal disorders globally are reported higher in females, increase overall with age, and peak at 60–69 years.

"We have forecast the 494 million cases in 2020 is projected to grow substantially to reach 1.06 billion people living with other musculoskeletal disabilities by 2050."

"A factor which may add to the projection, of course, is the emergence of post-COVID-19 implications where a growing cohort of related conditions characterized by musculoskeletal symptoms and loss of mobility are recognized, adding further pressure on health systems and communities."

**More information:** Tiffany K Gill et al, Global, regional, and national burden of other musculoskeletal disorders, 1990–2020, and projections to 2050: a systematic analysis of the Global Burden of Disease Study 2021, *The Lancet Rheumatology* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/S2665-9913\(23\)00232-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2665-9913(23)00232-1)

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