

Hip fracture patients vulnerable to COVID-19

5 February 2021



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More than half of COVID-19 cases in the study were thought to have been picked up the disease in hospital, findings from the first coronavirus wave suggest.

Doctors say that [hospital](#) set-ups have improved since then as more is understood about the disease, and the oldest and most at risk patients are now likely to have been vaccinated.

Researchers hope the findings may still help clinicians plan for protecting at-risk patients admitted for orthopedic surgery as the [pandemic](#) continues.

The study looked at data from patients over 50-years-old with hip [fractures](#) who were admitted across all Scottish hospitals during the first wave of the pandemic, from March to April 2020.

First lockdown

The timeframe captures the first recorded COVID-19 case in Scotland, the start of social distancing measures, the UK lockdown, and the peak of COVID-19 cases in Scotland.

The audit included more than 830 patients. The average age was 80-years and two-thirds were women.

More than half of the coronavirus infections in the study are thought to have occurred in hospital. Patients who stayed longer in hospital were more likely to acquire COVID-19, highlighting the importance of early appropriate discharge.

The study team caution that much has been learned since the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic. They urge that people who need to seek [medical attention](#) for injuries, including [hip fracture](#), continue to attend hospital as normal.

The study—published in the *Bone & Joint Journal*—was carried out by the University of Edinburgh in collaboration with the IMPACT-Scot Study Group and the Scottish Orthopedic Research Trust Into Trauma (SORT-IT).

"The first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic was a steep learning curve for all [healthcare providers](#), and the IMPACT Group results highlight the vulnerability of hip fracture patients to acquiring COVID-19 and the associated morbid consequences. Many of the [at-risk patients](#) will have now received the COVID-19 vaccine, and improved precautions to reduce the spread of infection have been introduced since this study took place. We hope that the study improves the understanding of COVID-19 and emphasizes the need to protect these vulnerable patients by prioritizing hip fracture services," says Andrew J. Hall.

More information: Andrew J. Hall et al. IMPACT-Scot 2 report on COVID-19 in hip fracture patients, *The Bone & Joint Journal* (2021). [DOI: 10.1302/0301-620X.103B.BJJ-2020-2027.R1](#)

Provided by University of Edinburgh

APA citation: Hip fracture patients vulnerable to COVID-19 (2021, February 5) retrieved 27 October 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-02-hip-fracture-patients-vulnerable-covid-.html>

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