



Post Pandemic Covid-19 Demands New Treatments for Osteoarthritis

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Opinion

The world has been affected by a devastating virus pandemic unknown to humanity caused by Covid-19. Thanks to internet, media, radio, TV and other worldwide communication systems we have had immediate access to information from the moment China disclosed this problem in Wuhan.

Apart from the sad deaths produced by this sinister virus in the population, almost every government and their health authorities have been forced to take action only known in times of war. The economic repercussions of this devastating pandemic are still to be calculated, but every forecast indicates that we expect an economic recession with loss of jobs and reduced income affecting millions of families worldwide.

One of the many lessons so far learned by governments and society is that no country is capable of controlling a pandemic like this, counting only on its own health service resources.

Budgets for health services and other services worldwide have already been reduced by trying to contain the advance of this deadly pandemic. On the other hand Osteoarthritis in large joints like hips, knees, shoulders etc. are increasing worldwide as the population gets older. With the treatments for osteoarthritis that we offer today, the number of patients are increasing. This is another hidden pandemic problem that we have to face, taking into consideration the reduced economical resources that health authorities will have to face soon. In the USA alone the expenditure treating arthritis runs into hundreds of billions of US dollars Osteoarthritis is initiated by a very superficial lesion in the articular cartilage of a joint, in many cases like a scratch, which is often ignored. During movement this deformity scratches the smooth surface of the rest of the articular cartilage and due to wear and tear; the joint becomes deformed and finally destroyed.

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We don't know of any radical treatment for this problem. Our approach by prescribing palliative therapy to kill pain, stiffness and inflammation helps patients use their damaged joints. In certain cases, these palliative therapies can last for years, until finally we opt for the final solution, which is to implant of the dreaded Total Hip Prosthesis (THP) or Knee Prosthesis (TKP) etc.

The total hip prosthesis surgery is very old, expensive, with multiple surgical and health complications, it hasn't changed much since the 60's when I was trained in this type of surgery in England. The surgical approach to osteoarthritis in large joints reminds the old gastrectomy surgery for treating peptic ulcers. The world has changed since then and it is expected to change in the post pandemic covid-19. The treatment of osteoarthritis with palliative therapies, and joint prosthesis surgery is draining resources from public and private resources worldwide limiting expenditure for other therapies in different diseases that can be treated with prompt success.

We are forced to find a more modern and biological way to combat this hidden pandemia. We need to change the concept and treatment of osteoarthritis. The way this disease is treated is wrong, contributing to make it a chronic one instead of providing a radical solution as soon as diagnosed. We should imitate dentists treating caries by resurfacing the tooth as soon as possible to prevent destruction and removal of the dental piece.

In patent GB2344290 "Device for replacing or repairing a joint" a method is described to reach the hip joint from behind, avoiding puncturing the capsule, in order to approach the joint space to be able to resurface the initial lesion in the articular cartilage with biomaterials, stem cell therapies, and cultivated cartilage etc. In this way, we will be able to avoid the progressive destruction of the joint and amputation of live bone, to implant the expensive and aggressive surgery of joint prosthesis (Visit: www.biototalhip.info).

Methods using modern visual X-ray devices, arthroscopy, modern biological materials, 3D printers, surgical robots etc, will help to resurface joints and can reduce years of treatment with drugs and other expensive therapies to a simple procedure. This will be welcome as a radical treatment and help the great majority of patients worldwide.

We should combine all our scientific resources, research

centers etc. to find more modern methods to resurface joints with biomaterials, etc. In this way; we can solve the financial problems that osteoarthritis treatment demands from National Health Service authorities and society in general. At the same time, it will alleviate suffering for millions of people worldwide, avoiding this hidden pandemic problem.