

# Effects of x-ray based diagnosis of knee osteoarthritis on patient beliefs about management: A randomised clinical trial



## WHAT WE DID

**617 people** aged  $\geq 45$  with and without knee pain were asked to imagine they were **seeing a general practitioner (GP)** for chronic knee pain.

Participants watched a video of the GP providing them with either a:



- 1) **clinical explanation of knee osteoarthritis (no x-rays)**
- 2) **radiographic explanation (not showing x-ray images)**
- 3) **radiographic explanation (showing x-ray images)**

## WHAT WE FOUND

### RADIOGRAPHIC (showing x-rays) vs CLINICAL explanation

Those who received a radiographic explanation....



Believed surgery was more necessary



No difference in beliefs about helpfulness of exercise & physical activity



Believed exercise & physical activity was more damaging to their knee



Were more concerned about their knee problem getting worse



Had greater fear of movement



Were more satisfied with the consult & info provided



Were more confident with accuracy of the diagnosis



There were no differences in beliefs between radiographic explanations with (group 3) and without (group 2) showing x-ray images.

## SUMMARY

Using x-rays rather than a clinical approach to diagnose & explain knee osteoarthritis can have **potentially undesirable impacts** on patient beliefs about knee osteoarthritis.



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