

# **Causal Relationship Between Bilateral Ankle Fusion and Bilateral Knee Osteoarthritis**

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## **A Rapid Systematic Review**

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## About this report

### Causal Relationship Between Bilateral Ankle Fusion and Bilateral Knee Osteoarthritis

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#### About the Evidence-Based Practice Group

The Evidence-Based Practice Group was established to address the many medical and policy issues that WorkSafeBC officers deal with on a regular basis. Members apply established techniques of critical appraisal and evidence-based review of topics solicited from both WorkSafeBC staff and other interested parties such as surgeons, medical specialists, and rehabilitation providers.

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Objectives

- To determine whether there is any evidence that bilateral ankle fusions would cause the development of bilateral knee osteoarthritis.

Methods

- A comprehensive and systematic literature search was conducted on March 5, 2024.
- The search was done on commercial medical literature databases, including BIOSIS Previews (1969 to 2008), Embase (1974 to 2024 Week 09), Medline and Epub Ahead of Print, Medline In-Process, In-Data-Review & Other Non-Indexed Citations, Medline Daily and Medline (1946 to March 04, 2024), Joanna Briggs Institute Evidence Based Practice Database (Current to February 28, 2024), Cochrane Clinical Answers (February 2024), that are available through Ovid platform.
- Combination of keywords were employed in this search. At first, we searched for published studies on the association of bilateral ankle (and other foot joints) fusion and the development of bilateral knee osteoarthritis. In this search, we employed these keywords:
  1. bilateral **AND** (fusion **OR** arthrodesis) **AND** (ankle **OR** foot **OR** hindfoot **OR** midfoot **OR** tibiotalar **OR** subtalar **OR** tibiotocalcaneal **OR** talonavicular **OR** triple **OR** midtarsal **OR** Chopart **OR** tarsometatarsal **OR** tarsal-metatarsal **OR** calcaneocuboid **OR** naviculocuneiform **OR** (transverse adj tarsal))
  2. bilateral **AND** (arthritis **OR** osteoarthritis **OR** arthrosis **OR** osteoarthrosis **OR** (degenerative **ADJ** joint **ADJ** disease)) **AND** knee
  3. #1 **AND** #2
- Subsequently we expanded our literature search to include any type of ankle (or foot joint) fusion and the development of knee osteoarthritis. When we did this search, many of the studies identified were presenting treatment outcomes which were not relevant to answer the objective of this systematic review. Hence, we re-ran our search but limited the study to those of non-treatment related articles. The keywords we employed in this search including:
  4. (fusion **OR** arthrodesis) **AND** (ankle **OR** foot **OR** hindfoot **OR** midfoot **OR** tibiotalar **OR** subtalar **OR** tibiotocalcaneal **OR** talonavicular **OR** triple **OR** midtarsal **OR** Chopart **OR** tarsometatarsal **OR** tarsal-metatarsal **OR** calcaneocuboid **OR** naviculocuneiform **OR** (transverse adj tarsal))
  5. (arthritis **OR** osteoarthritis **OR** arthrosis **OR** osteoarthrosis **OR** (degenerative **ADJ** joint **ADJ** disease)) **AND** knee
  6. treatment
  7. (#4 **AND** #5) **NOT** #6
- No other limitation was employed in our literature search.
- Manual search, on the references of the article retrieved in full, was undertaken.

Results

- Search results:

- Twenty-five<sup>(1-25)</sup> published studies were identified from search #3. Upon examination on the titles and abstracts of these 25<sup>(1-25)</sup> studies, none provided any relevant data to the objective of this systematic review.
- Hence, we then expanded our search to include any site of ankle (and foot joints) fusion and any site of knee osteoarthritis (search #4 - #7). Two hundred twenty<sup>(26-245)</sup> published studies were identified from this search. Examination of the titles and abstracts of these 220<sup>(26-245)</sup> studies did not provide any data to support the potential (causal) association that any ankle (or other foot joints) fusion and the development of (any site) of knee osteoarthritis.

## Summary

- At present, there is no data to support the (causal) association of bilateral ankle fusion and the development of bilateral knee osteoarthritis.
- At present, there is no data to support the (causal) association of (any site of) ankle fusion and the development of (any site of) knee osteoarthritis.

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## Appendix 1

### WorkSafeBC — Evidence-Based Practice Group levels of evidence (adapted from 1-6)

1	Experimental, randomized controlled trial (RCT), systematic review RCTs with or without meta-analysis.
2	Evidence from controlled trials without randomization (quasi-experimental studies) or systematic reviews of observational studies.
3	Evidence from cohort or case-control analytic studies, preferably from more than 1 centre or research group.
4	Evidence from comparisons between times or places with or without the intervention. Dramatic results in uncontrolled experiments.
5	Opinions of respected authorities, based on clinical experience, descriptive studies or reports of expert committees based on scientific evidence.

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