

PT may be better than meniscus surgery

By Pam Belluck, New York Times

A popular surgical procedure worked no better than fake operations in helping people with one type of common knee problem, suggesting that thousands of people may be undergoing unnecessary surgery, a new study in the New England Journal of Medicine reports.

The unusual study involved people with a torn meniscus, crescent-shaped cartilage that helps cushion and stabilize knees. Arthroscopic surgery on the meniscus is the most common orthopedic procedure in the United States, performed, the study said, about 700,000 times a year at an estimated cost of \$4 billion.

The study, conducted in Finland, involved a small subset of meniscal tears. But experts, including some orthopedic surgeons, said the study added to other recent research suggesting that meniscal surgery should be aimed at a narrower group of patients; that for many, options like physical therapy may be as good.

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