

# EPOSA FACT

## Osteoarthritis and social isolation

### Social isolation

Social isolation has been defined as the consequence of a small social network with few social contacts. It has been reported to be associated with poor physical and mental health. The signs and symptoms commonly associated with osteoarthritis (OA), most notably joint pain and reduced function, may increase the risk of social isolation.

In EPOSA, we examined the association between OA and incident social isolation in older adults.



Of the 1967 individuals with complete baseline and follow-up data, 382 (19.4%) were socially isolated at baseline; of the 1585 non-socially isolated individuals, 222 (14.0%) experienced social isolation during follow-up.

Four factors were significantly associated with incident social isolation: clinical OA, cognitive impairment, depression, and worse walking time.

Compared to those without OA at any site or with only hand OA, clinical OA of the hip and/or knee, combined or not with hand OA, led to a 1.47 times increased risk of social isolation.

### Conclusion

Clinical OA, present in one or two sites of the hip and knee, or in two or three sites of the hip, knee, and hand, increased the risk of social isolation. Clinicians should be aware that individuals with OA may be at greater risk of social isolation.

Based on: Siviero et al. *J Am Geriatr Soc* 2020;68:87-95.