Trends in incidence and average waiting time for arthroplasty from 1998-2021

An observational study of 252,376 patients from the Scottish Arthroplasty Project Database

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Background
Current waiting times for arthroplasty are reported as being the worst on record. This is a combination of the COVID-19 pandemic and prior difficulties in meeting demands in the years prior.

Methods
The Scottish Arthroplasty Project (SAP) is a national audit used to record all joint replacements. All TKA and THA from 1998-2021 were analysed, data linkage to national waiting times was performed via a unique identifier given to every person living in Scotland – the community health index (CHI).

Results
The minimum waiting times were both in 2013 for 5600 THR – 78.8 days and 7012 TKR – 79.1 days

Max waiting times are in 2021 with 2127 THR waiting 283.7 days and 3102 TKR waiting 316.8 days

Conclusion
This is the first robust large scale national data set showing trends in waiting time for arthroplasty over a 20 year period. We demonstrate a period of significant expansion of operations with an accompanied reduction in waiting time peaking in 2013, followed by paradoxical reducing numbers of procedures and an increase in waiting time.