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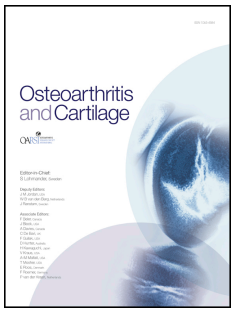

Is high tibial osteotomy superior to unloader brace treatment in patients with varus malaligned medial knee osteoarthritis?

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Title: Is high tibial osteotomy superior to unloader brace treatment in patients with varus malaligned medial knee osteoarthritis?

Keywords: HTO, Bracing, Osteoarthritis, Pain

Dear Editors,

We read with interest an article by van Outeren et al. published recently in this journal [1]. These authors compared the effectiveness of non-surgical treatment with that of high tibial osteotomy (HTO) in terms of pain severity and knee function in patients with varus aligned medial knee osteoarthritis (OA) at one-year follow-up. The results of the study indicated that HTO was more effective at reducing pain compared with non-surgical treatment; however, the study authors concluded that the benefits of HTO over brace treatment were questionable because the differences between the two groups were small. Nevertheless, there are some worthwhile issues that need to be explored.

First, patients with concurrent symptomatic OA of lateral compartments, symptomatic patello-femoral OA, or symptomatic hip or ankle pathology were excluded from the brace group[2]. However, patients with concurrent joint symptoms were included in the HTO group[3]. One quarter of patients with knee OA were reported to experience concurrent foot pain, which adversely affected health and function. There were differences in health and function between the groups with bilateral and ipsilateral foot pain compared with the group without foot pain[4]. Concurrent joint symptoms appeared to be an important factor contributing to pain severity and function. We are curious about whether concurrent joint symptoms would affect the results of visual