

# MUSCULOSKELETAL MATTERS

Arthritis Research UK National Primary Care Centre, Keele University

## Bulletin 1:

### WHAT DO GENERAL PRACTITIONERS SEE?

#### The Typical General Practice

We have created The Typical General Practice from the combined details of 12 practices which contribute to our Keele GP Research Partnership to give a picture of average workload.

- The Typical General Practice has 10,000 registered patients. 1,600 (16%) are aged 0–14, 4,600 (46%) are aged 15–49 and 3,800 (38%) are aged 50 and over.
- In the course of one year, the GPs saw 2,100 patients with musculoskeletal problems (21% of the registered population).
  - only respiratory illness was recorded for more patients (2,800).

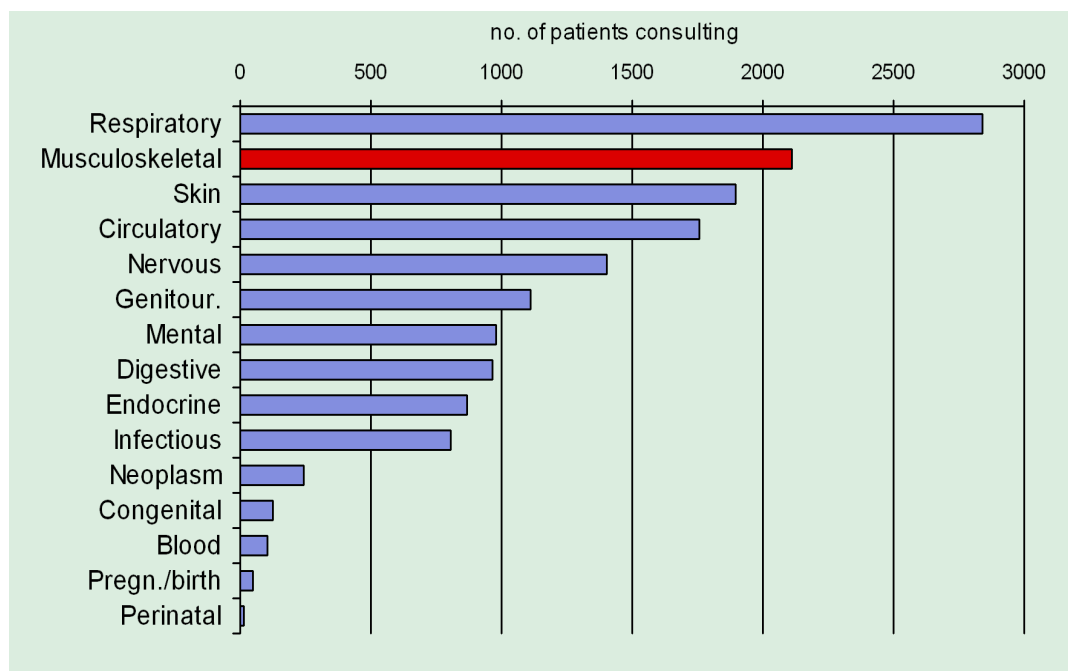


Figure 1 – Number of patients consulting by problem in a practice of 10,000

- There were a total of 4,400 musculoskeletal consultations during the year.
  - this compares with 6,100 consultations for respiratory illness.
- Musculoskeletal problems made up 12% of all consultations labelled with a diagnosis.

These bulletins are designed to provide information for general practitioners, the primary care team, teachers, trainers and policy makers about musculoskeletal problems in practice

The idea of this first bulletin is to provide a picture of the relative frequency of consultations for musculoskeletal problems in general practice

# DIFFERENT AGES, DIFFERENT PROBLEMS

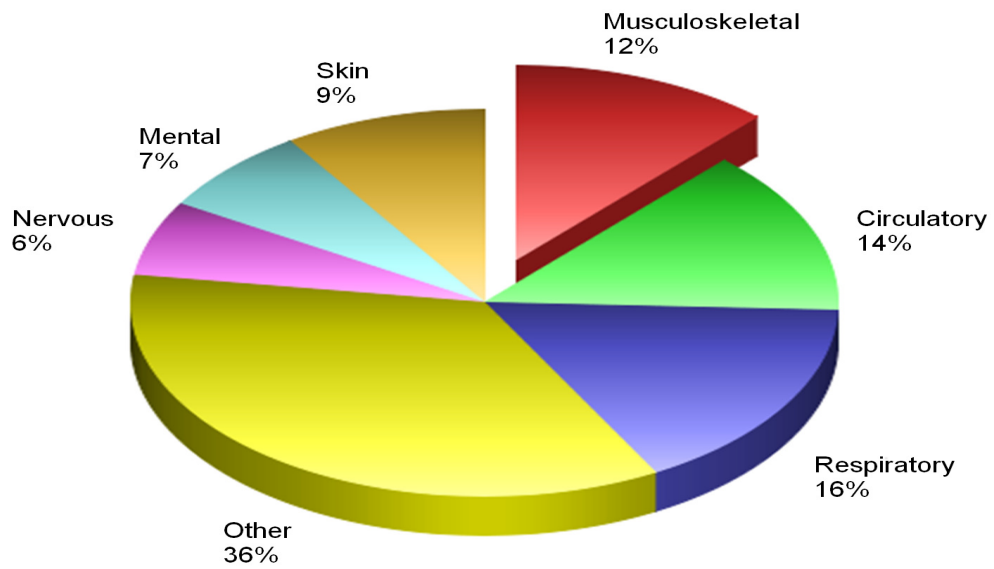


Figure 2 – Number of consultations by problem as proportion of all labelled consultations, all ages

- Among the 1,600 registered children aged 14 years or less :-  
80 (5%) consulted with a musculoskeletal problem.  
– By comparison, 620 (39%) children were seen with a respiratory illness.
- Among the 4,600 adults aged 15–49 :-  
850 (18%) consulted with a musculoskeletal problem.  
– By comparison, 1,100 (24%) consulted with a respiratory illness.
- Among the 3,800 adults aged 50 or over :-  
1,180 (31%) consulted with a musculoskeletal problem.  
– By comparison, 1,500 (39%) consulted with a circulatory problem and 1,100 (29%) consulted with a respiratory illness.

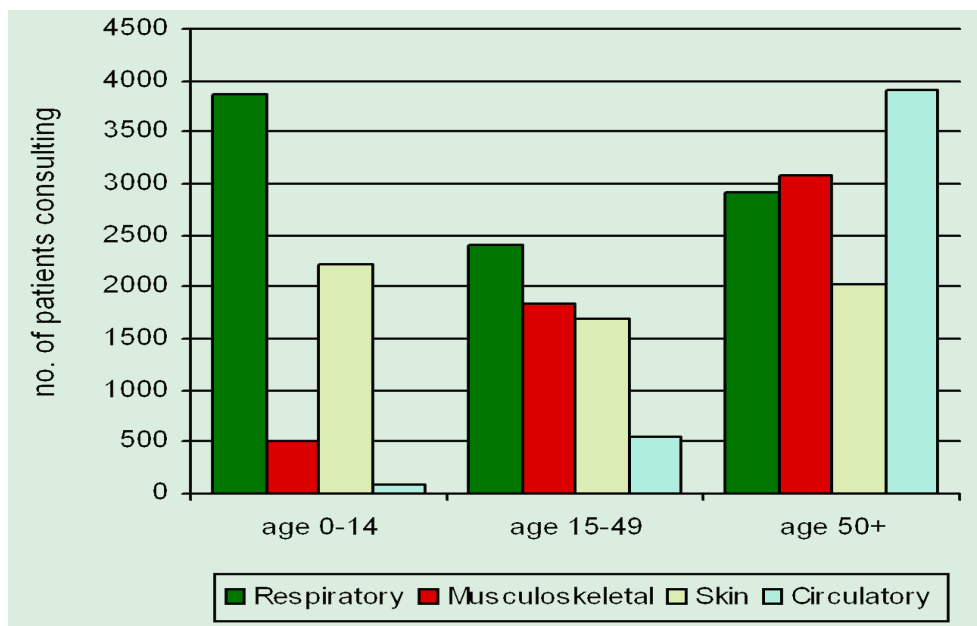


Figure 3 – Number of patients consulting per 10,000 by age group