



GLA:D™
AUSTRALIA



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physiotherapy**

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GLA:D Australia: A great first line treatment for knee and hip osteoarthritis



Current clinical guidelines for lower limb osteoarthritis (e.g. hip and knee) unanimously recommend exercise therapy, education and weight loss as a first line non-pharmacological treatment.(1-4)

GLA:D is an evidence-based program aimed at improving the quality of care in clinical practice. GLA:D consists of two sessions of patient education and 12 sessions of supervised, individualized neuromuscular exercise therapy delivered by trained physiotherapists and evaluated in a national clinical registry. The program has been successfully run in Denmark and is currently being implemented in Canada, Australia and China.

Unlike other programs, GLA:D is supported by compelling evidence and clinical guidelines.(5) In Denmark, with more than 30 000 participant data, GLA:D has shown to reduce sick leave and pain (25%); improve function, knee-related quality of life (QoL), and physical-activity levels; and reduce analgesia use by one-third.(5)



The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners recently published their guideline on the management of knee and hip osteoarthritis.(4) This guideline is an update of their previous 2009 guideline. This guideline strongly recommends regular exercise for relieving pain and improving function in people with hip and knee osteoarthritis. Weight management for those who are over weight (BMI >25) is also strongly recommended. There are several interventions that are strongly recommended against such as opioid use, stem cell therapy and arthroscopic surgical interventions such as debridement and meniscectomy. You can refer to the guideline on line at: <https://www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/musculoskeletal/hipandkneeosteoarthritis/>

There are several known barriers for patients that can make exercise therapy difficult to maintain and adhere to. Below is how the GLA:D™ Australia program delivers key program content (6) to ensure favourable outcomes for your patients.



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Evidence-based component of OA management	How GLA:D Facilitates
Education on osteoarthritis and the benefits of exercise	There are two 1 hour educational sessions packaged into the GLA:D program. These include: 1. What is osteoarthritis (OA), risk factors, symptoms, introduction to treatment 2. Exercise, activities in daily living, coping, self-help tools
Use of graded progressive exercises to ensure that pain and discomfort are not excessive during or after exercise	The GLA:D program incorporates neuromuscular exercises (NEMEX) in a small class environment. Each exercise is graded to the individuals' ability as assessed by the supervisor (a healthcare professional). Participants are observed and encouraged to report discomfort and pain levels during exercises.
Initial exercises should be under expert instruction and supervision	Exercise classes are supervised and run by physiotherapists who have been trained in the program.
Supplementary material should be available against face to face instruction	The GLA:D program incorporates exercises that can be easily performed at home or whilst travelling with minimal equipment. Supplementary material in the form of exercise sheets and log books are available for participants.
Monitoring over the long term with periodic re-assessment by a health professional is beneficial	GLA:D participants are asked to fill out a baseline osteoarthritis questionnaires and again at 3 months and 12 months with reminders. Participants are encouraged and supported to think and discuss exercise options beyond the 6 week program.

The bottom line is, this program can delay or prevent surgical intervention,(7) and help patients with long term favourable outcomes in both pain and function.

References

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