



Knee ARthroplasty versus joint Distraction Study for osteoarthritis (KARDS)

Lay summary of trial results (The KARDS Trial)

Knee osteoarthritis is a common condition and is associated with pain and mobility issues leading to a big impact on a person's quality of life. As the rates of obesity are increasing and the population is getting older, more people are getting knee osteoarthritis. There are not currently any treatments that can cure knee osteoarthritis or stop it getting worse. People with bad symptoms of knee osteoarthritis are usually offered knee replacement surgery. However, many people who have a knee replacement still have problems after surgery, and young and active people often need further surgeries. We ran the KARDS study to see if a new treatment called Knee Joint Distraction is as good as a knee replacement at improving symptoms of knee osteoarthritis for people 65 and under. Rather than replacing the arthritic joint, a frame is fixed to the outside of the knee for 6 weeks using metal pins or wires inserted into the shin and thigh bone. The frame gently pulls apart the knee joint, allowing the cartilage to repair. The COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult to run KARDS as the UK NHS had reduced capacity and many operations were cancelled. Recruitment to KARDS was slow and the study was stopped early, after only 24 patients from one hospital had been randomly allocated to the two surgery groups. We had planned to recruit 344 patients in total and follow up all patients for 24 months after their operation. The number of participants who took part in the study was too small to enable us to answer the research question. However, finding out if Knee Joint Distraction is as good as Knee Replacement remains important, and we hope that the data collected in this study will help to design future studies. The KARDS study was centrally coordinated by the Clinical Trials Research Unit based at the University of Leeds. The University of Leeds was the trial sponsor (the organisation who took responsibility for the running of the trial). KARDS was funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Health Technology Assessment programme (17/122/06).