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Nearly all shoulder replacement patients under age 55 return to sports

SAN DIEGO, Calif. (March 14, 2017)—A new study being presented today at the [2017 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons \(AAOS\)](#), found that 96.4 percent of recreational athletes, age 55 and younger, who underwent [total shoulder replacement surgery](#) returned to at least one sport, on average, within seven months of surgery.

Today, about 53,000 people in the U.S. have shoulder replacement surgery each year, according to the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. This compares to more than 900,000 Americans a year who have hip and knee replacement surgery. In shoulder replacement surgery, the damaged parts of the shoulder are removed and replaced with artificial components, called a prosthesis. A total shoulder replacement involves replacing the arthritic joint surfaces with a highly polished metal ball attached to a stem, and a plastic socket.

In younger patients, repetitive movements required in various sporting activities can cause early osteoarthritis, or wear and tear of the joint, resulting in the need for a replacement.

In this study, researchers conducted a retrospective review of 61 patients who underwent a total shoulder replacement. The average age at the time of surgery was 48.9 years (ages 25 to 55), of which most of the shoulder damage (80.3 percent) was caused by osteoarthritis. Nearly 68 percent of patients said they hoped to return to sports following surgery.

Among the study highlights:

- Ninety-three percent of patients were satisfied with the outcomes of their surgery, and 96.4 percent (55 out of 57 patients) returned to at least one sport at an average of 6.7 months following surgery.
- The direct rates of return to sports included: fitness sports (97.2 percent), golf (93.3 percent), singles tennis (87.5 percent), swimming (87.5 percent), basketball (75 percent) and flag football (66.7 percent).
- More than 90 percent of patients returned to a high-demand sport and 83.8 percent returned to a sport that required high use of the arms and shoulders.
- There was no significant difference in the rate of return to sport by body mass index, sex, age, preoperative diagnosis, revision status and/or dominant extremity.

“Our results evaluated patients at an average of five years of follow up and most patients continued to be very satisfied and performed a high number of sporting activities, including those that required high use of their shoulders,” said study author Grant Garcia, MD, an orthopaedic surgeon at the Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) in New York. “This information is important as it demonstrates that total shoulder arthroplasty may be a good option in younger patients who are indicated for a shoulder replacement.”

The study, [“High satisfaction and return to sports after total shoulder arthroplasty: age 55 and younger,”](#) appeared in the Sept. 28, 2016 issue of the [World Journal of Orthopaedics](#).

[Study abstract](#)

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