

# ABSTRACT

Osteoarthritis (OA) is one of the most common causes of morbidity seen in clinical medical and podiatric practice. Pain and discomfort from OA are frequently a major cause of loss of mobility and independence, particularly in the older population. A variety of treatment options are available to health professionals when treating this condition, reliant on the extent and severity of the clinical signs and symptoms of this form of joint disease. Podiatrists, in caring for the lower extremity, encounter osteoarthritis daily in clinical practice, within joints of the foot, ankle, leg and spine. This paper seeks to provide an insight into current management principles for osteoarthritis, with an emphasis on the pharmacological treatments that are currently available, or still under research.

## INTRODUCTION

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common form of rheumatic disease and the fourth most commonly managed condition in Australian general practice (Traynor et al, 1994). OA causes widespread morbidity, particularly to the middle aged and elderly, and is managed by a variety of health professionals – each attempting to provide relief from the symptoms of the disease through pharmacological or non-pharmacological measures. Osteoarthritis is also known as degenerative joint disease, although this may now be considered a misnomer due to improvements in our understanding that allow us to view the pathology of OA as a combination of active anabolic and

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