



NZOA

New Zealand
Orthopaedic
Association

Metal on Metal Hip Implant Information 23 April 2016

There has been some recent media coverage of problems with the large head DePuy Pinnacle Utamet metal on metal hip implant. This coverage has also referred to previous problems with the ASR hip implant. The problems relate to the implants having higher than expected rates of revision (repeat surgery, where implants or components of them are removed and replaced).

The New Zealand Orthopaedic Association (NZOA) would like to reassure New Zealanders that the great majority of hip implants are very successful and cause no problems. The NZOA monitors the outcomes of hip replacements using all products, through the New Zealand Joint Registry.

The registry is beginning to show a trend of greater than expected revisions for a specific type of Pinnacle implant - the large head Pinnacle Utamet device, but raises no concerns for other Pinnacle implants.

This latest information from the registry has confirmed what has been raised as a concern around the world - that people with large head (>36mm) metal on metal prosthesis need to be monitored, and these types of implants should no longer be used other than in very specific cases. This implant stopped being used in New Zealand in 2012.

Questions and answers

I want to find out what sort of hip implant I have, what should I do?

Please talk to your surgeon or GP. They will be able to confirm what type of implant you have.

How will I know if I have a problem with my hip implant?

The great majority of hip implants are very successful and cause no problems. However, if you have symptoms that include hip/groin pain, local swelling, numbness, or changes in your ability to walk, contact your doctor or surgeon to let them know so you can be advised on further follow-up or treatment.

How many of the large head DePuy Pinnacle Utamet implant have been used in New Zealand?

963 of the large head DePuy Utamet devices have been implanted in NZ. The yearly revision rate for the Utamet device from 2002 to 2012 is 1.26% against an industry average of 0.73%. Some were revised because of metal reaction while others are likely to have been

revised because of concerns about potential metal reactions. These implants have not been used in New Zealand since 2012.

What is the problem with metal on metal implants?

In metal-on-metal devices both the ball and socket components are made of metal. These metal implants have been used in total hip replacement surgeries and hip resurfacing procedures.

Because of metal's durability, metal-on-metal devices were expected to last longer than other hip implants. In addition, the ball in this metal-on-metal device is larger, making the hip joint more stable and less likely to dislocate.

Metal on metal implants have also been used because they avoid the complication of debris wear from implants made of plastic/polyethylene. However, more recent information about the wear of certain metal-on-metal devices has raised concerns about their use. Metal surfaces give off small particles of debris. In addition, metal surfaces can corrode, giving off metal ions. Metal debris (ions and particles) can enter the space around the implant, as well as enter the bloodstream. This can cause a reaction in some patients, such as pain or swelling around the hip, osteolysis, and very rarely symptoms in other parts of the body.

It should be noted that the vast majority of patients have not had problems with metal on metal implants.

What about the safety of other types of Pinnacle implants?

The NZ Joint Registry does not show any trends of increased revision for other Pinnacle implants – only the large head implants.

I have a Pinnacle implant, what should I do?

Anyone with a large head metal on metal implant should be under review by their surgeon. If you are experiencing symptoms such as hip/groin pain, local swelling, numbness, or changes in your ability to walk, contact your surgeon.

If you aren't experiencing any symptoms, but are concerned about having a Pinnacle implant, talk to your surgeon about options.

I have an ASR implant, what should I do?

A total of 525 ASR primary hip systems were implanted in New Zealand between 2004 and 2010. This includes 149 resurfaced hips and 376 conventional ASRs. The conventional ASR implants were found to have higher than expected rates of repeat surgery. In 2010, MedSafe issued an alert advising surgeons to contact their patients with ASR implants and advise them of the issue and their options, and continue to monitor them.

If you experience any symptoms including hip/groin pain, local swelling, numbness, or changes in your ability to walk, contact your surgeon.

If you have an ASR implant and are not experiencing any symptoms it is important you continue to see your doctor or surgeon for regular follow-up. This monitoring may involve routine X-rays to check the positioning of the implant, and other tests.

New Zealand patients who have an ASR implant and wish to seek compensation should contact ACC or DePuy Synthes (<http://www.depuysynthes.com/asrrecall/nzpatient.html>).

What is the life-span of a hip implant?

Hip implants generally last between 15 and 20 years but often much longer. There are many still active patients whose implants were put in as long as 30-40 years ago.

Factors include the condition of the patient (osteoporosis or other bone conditions), general physical health and ability to exercise, be active and maintain a good weight.

All hip replacements wear out over time and may need replacement (revision surgery). Over time, orthopaedic implants may require full or partial replacement. Reasons include loosening, positioning problems, wear, or falls and accidents.

What is the New Zealand Joint Registry?

The NZ Joint Registry was established to improve the outcomes of joint replacement surgery. It has been very effective at identifying and highlighting specific devices that are not performing well. It has been in place for over 16 years, and is one of the most complete in the world. An audit in March 2015 found 95 percent compliance by New Zealand public hospitals in providing data to the registry. The registry enables the following information to be collected:

- survivorship of different types of implants and techniques
- revision rates and reasons for these
- infection and dislocation rates
- patient satisfaction outcomes
- audit for individual surgeons, hospitals, and regions
- opportunities for in-depth studies of certain cohorts.