

## Bone and joint problems of childhood cancer survivors

Summarized by Corinne Matti and Carina Nigg

### What did we want to find out with our study?

Problems related to joint, bones, or muscles, also known as the “musculoskeletal system” are important late effects after childhood cancer. These include osteoporosis (fragile bones), joint pain, or when one leg is shorter than the other. With this study we aimed to demonstrate how frequently such problems occur and who is particularly affected.

### Why is this important?

Healthy bones, joints, and muscles are important to managing daily life – whether it’s going shopping, climbing stairs, or getting dressed. Impairments of the musculoskeletal system can significantly complicate everyday life.

### What did we exactly do?

As part of the Swiss Childhood Cancer Survivor Study (SCCSS), we sent questionnaires to childhood cancer survivors, asking about issues related to the musculoskeletal system. The study included all individuals who had been diagnosed at least five years ago and were at least 15 years old at the time of the survey.

### What did we find out and what does this mean?

One of four survivors (26%) reported at least one current issues with the musculoskeletal system.

These problems were more frequently observed in female participants, individuals who had bone tumor, those who had a relapse requiring intensive treatment, and individuals who had been diagnosed with cancer at an early age.

As part of follow-up care, it is important to ask survivors about issues with their bones, joints, or muscles. This allows to refer survivors experiencing such issues to rehabilitations services, such as physiotherapy, to make their everyday life easier.

**Further information:** [www.swiss-ccss.ch](http://www.swiss-ccss.ch)

**Reference:** Christen S, Roser K, Mader L, Otth M, Scheinemann K, Sommer G, Kuehni C, Michel G. Incidence and prevalence of musculoskeletal health conditions in survivors of childhood and adolescent cancers: A report from the Swiss childhood cancer survivor study. *Cancer Medicine*, 2024;13e7204.

**You can find the full article in English [here](#).**

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