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Physical Therapists Hold the Answer Even When Supplements

Do Not

ST PAUL___Despite widespread use, the supplement chondroitin does not appear to help a majority of individuals with hip and knee pain caused by osteoarthritis.

According to the April 17, 2007 edition of *Annals of Internal Medicine* Stephan Reichenbach, MD and associates in Switzerland and Germany discovered that while previous meta-analyses described moderate to large benefits of chondroitin in patients with osteoarthritis, recent large-scale trials did not find evidence to support that theory.

“Fortunately,” according to Dr. Timothy Flynn from Regis University, Denver, and board member of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists (AAOMPT), “there are alternatives.” Dr. Flynn said that by “using an innovative treatment approach consisting of manual physical therapy and specific exercise based on recent high quality research, patients with knee arthritis frequently report a 20-40% relief in their symptoms after only two or three sessions of manual physical therapy and exercise.” He added that “these improvements are usually maintained for up to one year.”

Similar results were observed in a recently published follow-on trial in patients with knee arthritis, Flynn said. “At one year, patient improvements were maintained and patients

who received a combination of manual physical therapy and exercise were less likely to be taking medications for their arthritis.” “Evidence also suggests that patients with hip arthritis experience similar benefits from manual physical therapy and exercise,” he added.

“The research is clear. Individuals with hip and knee arthritis should see their physical therapist first, before trying dietary supplements, prescription drugs, or surgery,” suggested Dr. Flynn. “A physical therapist can help you alleviate the pain in your knees and hips and show you how to prevent that pain from coming back.”

To read a synopsis of the study in “Annals of Internal Medicine,” go to:

www.annals.org and search for Vol. 146, No 8, 17 April 2007.

For more information about the benefits of physical therapy and how it can help you alleviate knee and back pain associated with osteoarthritis, eliminate your use of supplements or prescription drugs, and prevent costly and painful surgery, go to: <http://www.aaompt.org>, or contact your local physical therapist.