

Is knee arthroscopy in patients over 55 years old completely safe without any risk of osteonecrosis?

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INTRODUCTION: The aim of this retrospective study is to report a series of patients who developed avascular necrosis after knee arthroscopy in an effort to delineate causal factors and treatment results.

METHODS: We retrospectively studied patients between January 2015 and March 2024, who had developed osteonecrosis of the knee after a routine arthroscopic surgery for meniscal tears treatment. All adult patients with isolated meniscus tears and grade 2 or less chondral lesions were included. Patients with evidence of preoperative bone edema on MRI performed 6 weeks or longer after symptom onset were excluded.

RESULTS:

Eight patients out of 1079 arthroscopies met the inclusion criteria. There were 3 women and 5 men [mean age 61 (range 55-71)]. The lesions noted at arthroscopy included 7 medial meniscus tears that were treated with excision and 1 lateral meniscal tear that was treated with suture repair and still developed osteonecrosis. None of them was traumatic while all patients had early degenerative changes in the compartment of interest.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

Osteonecrosis should be considered in older patients who have worsening symptoms after arthroscopy of the knee for degenerative meniscus tears and partial meniscectomy.