

## **Avascular Necrosis of the Hip (Osteonecrosis):**

Avascular necrosis of the hip is a disease that directly affects the blood supply to the femoral head (hip), gradually leading to bone loss below the cartilage resulting in progressive deformity of the femoral head and subsequent cartilage destruction and arthrosis.

This disease affects between 10,000 and 20,000 new patients a year in Mexico, many of them adults between the ages of 40 and 50. Even though the real cause of the disease hasn't been scientifically determined, the most accepted plausible theory is that blood flow is interrupted in small vessels that nurture the head and neck of the proximal femur.

This situation progresses rapidly and is manifested by hip pain that irradiates to the groin and knee. At first the pain is tolerable, but then it gradually becomes unbearable. It is also accompanied by limb shortening, limping and a diminished range of movement about the hip.

### **Risk factors:**

There are many known risk factors in patients that develop avascular necrosis of the hip, the most commonly known are:

- Traumatic hip dislocation.
- Femoral head or neck fractures.
- Alcoholism.
- Chronic use of steroids.
- Rheumatoid arthritis.
- Lupus.
- Hyperthyroidism.
- Gaucher's disease.
- Blood cell diseases.
- Sickle cell anaemia.
- Heavy smoking.
- Etc.

### **Diagnosis:**

Diagnosis can be difficult in early stages of the disease. With a detailed medical history and clinical exploration by your physician, he/she will be able to determine the existence of this disease. He/she will ask for special tests such as x rays, MRI of the hip region or bone scans to confirm his/her suspicions.

**Treatment:**

If the avascular necrosis of the hip is detected in the early stages and there isn't much bone loss and damage to the cartilage, there are several surgical procedures that can be used to decompress the femoral head, promote blood vessel formation and restore bone stock. These procedures can be accompanied by the use of different kinds of grafts.

If the avascular necrosis of the hip is in a more advanced stage, with severe bone loss and severe damage to the overlying hip cartilage, then a total hip replacement is the most likely indication.

If you have any doubts regarding avascular necrosis of the hip don't hesitate to contact us. Remember, we are here to help you.

Dr. Stefan Martínez van Gils & Dr. Isaac Cervantes.

**NOTE: The main reason for the above information is to aid patients. We are not responsible for the decisions made by patients without previously consulting their attending physician.**