

# Clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of open and arthroscopic rotator cuff repair [the UK Rotator Cuff Surgery (UKUFF) randomised trial]

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## Plain English summary

### Effectiveness of open and arthroscopic rotator cuff repair

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## Plain English summary

The rotator cuff is a group of muscles and tendons that control shoulder movement. Degenerative tears of the tendons are a common cause of shoulder pain and dysfunction and some patients may be offered surgery to repair the tear if non-surgical treatment has been unsuccessful.

The UK Rotator Cuff Surgery (UKUFF) trial was designed with patient involvement to assess the best surgical technique for repairing rotator cuff tears. Two different surgical approaches are currently used: open surgery, in which the tendons are reattached to bone under direct vision through a normal surgical incision, and arthroscopic surgery, in which small incisions allow thin metal tubes containing surgical cameras and instruments to be used to carry out the repair. It is unclear which technique produces the best and most cost-effective outcome for patients.

Patients were asked to participate in the study in 47 different hospitals around the UK and were assigned to have either open surgery or arthroscopic surgery.

Patients involved in the study were followed up with telephone and postal questionnaires asking if their symptoms had changed after surgery for 2 years and with a magnetic resonance imaging scan at 1 year to see if the repair had been successful.

Generally, patients in the study benefited from a significant improvement in their symptoms and the rate of complications was very low, even though 40% of the repairs had not healed.

The results of the study show that both open and arthroscopic types of surgery are equally effective and cost-effective in treating shoulder pain and function in patients with rotator cuff tear.

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