Box 1

Risk factors for osteoarthritis

Generalised predisposition

- Family history of OA
- Obesity: increases the risk of knee and hand OA
- Female gender/hormones: increased OA in women and after the menopause
- Bone mineral density: negative association of osteoporosis with OA

Localised biomechanical factors

- Trauma: history of joint injury, eg ACL* tear or meniscectomy
- Physical activity: certain occupations, eg construction workers
- Joint alignment: eg varus (bow-legged) or valgus (knock-kneed) deformities
- Elite sports: high-intensity joint-loading sports

*ACL = anterior cruciate ligament