

# Are wires as effective as metal plates for fixing fractured wrists?

## THE PROBLEM



Some wrist fractures require surgery and most NHS patients are given a metal plate screwed into the bone to hold it together. However, studies have suggested that using wire is cheaper and as effective. This is quicker to perform but surgeons were concerned that wires might not hold the bone in position as well as a plate, so a clinical trial was needed into the long-term impacts.

## THE STUDY

The DRAFFT study involved 461 patients from 20 NHS hospitals who were randomly allocated a wire or metal plate, to compare the two. After 12 months, they were sent annual questionnaires for the following five years to assess pain and function of their wrist.



## THE RESULTS

There was no difference in wrist pain and function between the two groups during the five years' follow-up. Therefore wire can be used as a cheaper alternative to metal plates in patients with fractured wrists.



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