

# Introduction

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Osteomyelitis is an old disease, identified in dinosaur bones, early hominids and skeletons from ancient civilisations. It is named from the components of the disease ( osteo , bone; marrow; itis , inflammation; Greek) and is caused by bacterial invasion of the bone. Worldwide, acute infection of bones and joints remains common in children. In adults, open fractures and orthopaedic implant surgery produce a large number of severe infections each year. Orthopaedic infection can present acutely , with major systemic upset, local inflammation and purulence, or insidiously , with gradual bone destruction leading to loss of function and slowly evolving local symptoms, with or without systemic features. Bone and joint infections cause a substantial burden of complex morbidity . Acute infections can be life- or limb-threatening, while chronic disease may produce prolonged disability , pain and ill-health. This has major implications for patient mental health and social interactions.

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