



Presenter: New research has found that an artificial hip developed in Exeter in the 60's is still problem free in the vast majority of patients fitted with it. The implant is now used in thousands of hip operations nationwide but studies are still being carried out in Devon where it was invented.

Here's our health reporter, Marcus Wraight.
(Victor Small working in garden- voice over)

M Wraight: Victor Small is a keen gardener and remains fairly active, even though he's a day short of 83. He's lived in Sidford all his life. After getting arthritis in his late 40's, he then had two hip replacements, the 1st 33 years ago and the 2nd 12 years later. He hasn't had a problem with them since.

Victor Small (to camera): They said it could possibly be seven years, I think that was about the limit they gave it. They said they could always do another one, always do a secondary one if anything went bad, but I'm still counting.

M Wraight (Voice over) He's been fitted with 2 so-called Exeter hips. The implant was developed in the city in the 60's.

(To Camera- holding hip) And this is it, this is the Exeter hip. Now most people when they have a hip replacement operation have absolutely no idea what sort of a hip they're going to be fitted with, but research has found that in patients fitted with this 33 years ago, 9 out of 10 who are still alive today are still walking around on the same hip.

(Voice over) Clinician's in Exeter continue to fit them and are still researching its progress but it took decades for the hip's clinical success to be recognised. Now it's fitted worldwide.

G Gie: It was a radical design at that time and many believed it wouldn't function and in fact it took about 20 years to actually convince the world that it was a very good hip and worked very well. So the sales were pretty small until the early 1990's but in the last 10-15 years they've increased hugely.

(Back to Victor's garden)
M Wraight: Most patients expect a hip about 15 years and the national guidelines only go up to ten. So Victor Small, he's more than happy that such an experimental procedure all those years ago has meant being able to live a long and active life.