

STUDY RESULTS: Do Patients Differ in Their Assessment of Rheumatoid Arthritis Disease Symptoms Compared with Their Doctors?*

Authors: Pooneh Akhavan, Mohammad Movahedi, Claire Bombardier

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) is a chronic disease that requires regular follow-ups. Doctors' make treatment decisions based on their assessment of disease status, a process which takes into consideration physical examination (tender and swollen joint counts), lab test findings, and patient responses to standardized questionnaires. Patients' assessment of their disease severity is based on these and other factors such as pain, fatigue, and level of disability. Both patients' and doctors' assessment of disease status changes over time.

The OBRI investigators looked at the patients' and doctors' assessment of disease status in early RA patients joining OBRI and 1 year later. The difference between patients' scores of disease symptoms and doctors' scores of disease activity were compared and the factors affecting these scores were examined. There was a significant difference between the patients' and doctors' assessment in approximately 25% of the early RA patients joining OBRI. In most cases, the patients' score was higher than the physicians' score. One year later, the difference remained but was smaller. A closer look at the patients who scored themselves higher than the physicians at entry into OBRI showed that these patients had more fatigue, disability, pain, tender joints, and comorbidities. The patients who scored higher 1 year later had higher pain scores.

Doctors should consider this finding when making treatment decisions.

****Factors affecting the discrepancy between patient and physician global assessment of disease activity in patients with early rheumatoid arthritis over time. EULAR Annual Scientific Meeting, Madrid, ESP. June 12-15, 2019 (Poster Presentation)***