

## Use of MEDSCHECK Program Among Rheumatoid Arthritis Patients – Results from Ontario Best Practice Research Initiative (OBRI)

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**Objective:** The MedsCheck program is one of many professional services offered by Ontario community pharmacists. It consists of a one-on-one interview between a pharmacist and a patient to review patients' medications. It is designed to encourage patients to better understand their medication therapy, and to ensure they can experience benefit from their medications by taking them correctly. Any patient with a valid Ontario Health Card who is currently taking a minimum of 3 prescription medications for a chronic condition is eligible to receive a Medscheck review. The aim of this study was to identify the number of patients who are participating in the Ontario Best Practices Research Initiative (OBRI) who reported receiving a Medscheck review within the last year

**Methods:** From the OBRI clinical registry of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients (N =2081), 733 patients who were currently suffering from 3 or more chronic medical conditions were deemed eligible for this study. From the eligible patients, 20% were randomly selected (N=121) to be contacted using a telephonic survey. The selected patients (n=121) were contacted directly by an OBRI telephone interviewer to determine whether they had received a Medscheck review by their local pharmacy. The patient questionnaire was created in collaboration with the Ontario Pharmacist's Association (OPA).

**Results:** Out of the 121 eligible RA patients, the telephone interviewers were able to contact 105 patients. The mean (SD) age of patients was 62.4 (10.4) years and 84 (69%) were females. The mean (SD) disease activity score at baseline was 4.8 (1.4). Of these 105 patients, 32% reported that their pharmacist had performed a MedsCheck review with them in the last one year. Thirty patients (88%) reported that the review took between 15-30 minutes and on an effectiveness scale of 1-10 (10 = extremely effective), 41% reported that they found the review extremely effective at addressing their medical concerns. Lastly, 79% of the patients reported that they would not be interested in a pharmacist review program that solely focused on their arthritis medications.

**Conclusion:** Our review highlights that the Ontario MedsCheck is currently underutilized in a cohort of rheumatoid arthritis patients. Of interest, a good proportion of patients who did experience this service found it extremely effective at addressing their medical concerns. These results may be useful for practicing pharmacists to advocate for an increased awareness and usage of the Ontario MedsCheck medication review for patients.