

Patient Perceptions and Expectations Towards the Role of Rheumatologists in the Recommendations of Physical Activity Practice – A Cross-sectional Study Involving 308 Patients Living with Rheumatoid Arthritis in France

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BACKGROUND/PURPOSE

Context: Rheumatologists consider physical activity (PA) to be an important goal of the care of patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA). However, there are very few studies on patients' perceptions of and expectations on the rheumatologist's role in PA participation counselling.

Objective: Describe RA patients participation in PA and their perception of rheumatologist recommendations to engage in PA.

METHODS

An online survey was conducted among French RA patients on Carenity.com, an online patient community.

The survey was available from **January to February 2019**.

To ensure RA diagnosis, only patients who had reported being treated with at least one Disease-Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drug were included in the analysis.

PROFILE

Sample size: 308 respondents

Gender



11% 89%

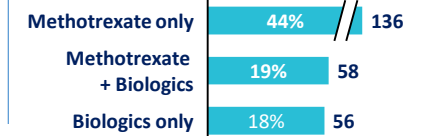
Age

(mean,SD)
53
years
SD: 11.0

Time since diagnosis

(mean, SD)
9 years
SD: 11.6

Main DMARDs



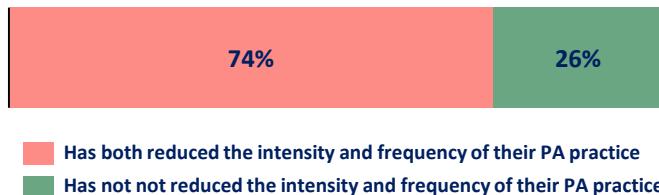
RESULTS

A. Level of physical activity

97% of patients reported that they were engaged in a PA:

- domestic activities (77%)
- active mobility (i.e. walking or cycling; 73%)
- sports (36%)

Figure 1. Decrease reported in the PA participation (both intensity and frequency) since RA diagnosis - n=308 patients

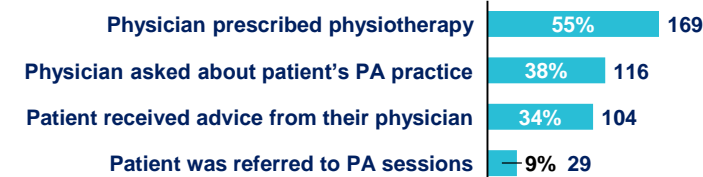


B. Motivations and obstacles to PA

Fatigue (64%), pain (54%) and functional impairment (38%) were the main barriers to PA participation

The beneficial effects of PA on mood (69%), on the condition (44%), and physician advice (24%) play an important role in patients' motivation to engage in PA

Figure 2. Main encouragement of PA by healthcare professionals n=308 patients



C. Patient's perceptions of the rheumatologist's knowledge of PA practice

Half of the patients believed their rheumatologist did not know what type of PA to recommend in them (median: 5.0/10, with 10="Totally agree").

A quarter of patients felt that their rheumatologist had limited knowledge of the impact of PA practice on joints and were not able to answer their questions on PA (third quartile: 5.0/10, with 10="Totally agree"). However, another quarter of patients had a good perception of their rheumatologist on these topics (first quartile: 0/10).

D. Expectations in terms of tools and services to support PA

Figure 3. Main expectations in terms of tools and services to support PA practice - n=308 patients



CONCLUSION

Given that physical activity is considered an integral part of RA management, rheumatologists play an essential role in encouraging PA practice, along with other health professionals, including physiotherapists. Communication between physicians and RA patients about PA needs to be optimized, personalized and practical information on PA practice should be encouraged.