A Study on Knowledge of Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis about Their Disease at Al Basra Teaching Hospital

By

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Abstract

Background: Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic autoimmune inflammatory disease characterized by persistent synovitis and systemic inflammation. Assessing the knowledge of RA patients about their disease can help address misconceptions and barriers to optimal disease management. It helps to identify the need to develop health education programs that target the enhancement of patients' knowledge.

Aims: To assess the level of knowledge of RA patients about their disease and to identify the patient’s need for an education program about their disease. Patients and Method: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at Al Basra Teaching Hospital Rheumatology outpatient clinic. The study included 400 RA patients diagnosed according to the 2010 ACR/EULAR classification criteria for RA. Data were collected through direct interviews using a modified version of the Patient Knowledge Questionnaire (PKQ). The PKQ includes six domains: causes of RA, clinical features, blood tests, medications, exercise, and joint protection. Results: The mean age of the participants was 41.99 ± 13.34 years, with a female predominance (84.5%). The mean total score of knowledge about RA among the patients was 24.12 ± 4.41 out of a maximum score of 40. The distribution of knowledge levels was 20.0% poor, 39.5% fair, and 40.5% good. Significant associations were found between knowledge levels and factors such as age, educational level, occupation, and primary source of information.

Conclusion: The findings of this study reveal gaps in RA patients' knowledge, particularly in areas related to joint protection and the significance of regular exercise. These highlight the need for educational programs specific to RA patients' needs.