

63 percent of RA patients suffer psychiatric disorders, with depressive spectrum conditions most likely

12 June 2009

Over half (63%) of patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) also suffer from psychiatric disorders, with the majority of these (87%) occurring in the depressive spectrum, according to the results of a new study. Interestingly, over half (52%) of the patients studied indicated that they had experienced stress events before the onset of their RA.

The study also revealed a number of other interesting findings about the emotional burden of RA:

- Cognitive dysfunction was diagnosed in 23% of patients, with 16% of this attributed to depression
- A third (33%) suffered from sleep disorders
- Those with depression also exhibited more severe RA (measured by X-ray), greater functional insufficiency and pain, as well as having received less aggressive treatment than patients without depression. (No significant differences in age, duration of illness, gender or DAS28* scores were noted between the two groups)
- Significantly, cognitive impairments were found more often ($p=0.02$) in patients older than 50 years (39% vs. 9%)
- The age of the first prednisone intake was significantly higher (p

APA citation: 63 percent of RA patients suffer psychiatric disorders, with depressive spectrum conditions most likely (2009, June 12) retrieved 16 September 2022 from

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