

**Importance of patient education in management of patients with
rheumatoid arthritis: an intervention study**

Journal: Egyptian Rheumatology & Rehabilitation, Vol 46, pages 42–47
(2019)

Background

People living with chronic diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis (RA) are extremely in need of patient education (PE) to adapt and cope with the effects of the disease and treatments. PE comprises all educational activities provided for patients, including aspects of therapeutic education, health education, and health promotion.

Objective

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effect of PE program following the eight evidence-based EULAR-2015 recommendations in the management of patients with RA.

Patients and methods

A randomized controlled clinical trial with two parallel arms was carried out at the Department of Rheumatology and Rehabilitation, Faculty of Medicine, Fayoum University, Egypt. One hundred patients (both sexes) having RA were included in the study, and their mean age was 39.23 ± 11.28 years, with range from 19 to 71 years. Patients were randomly allocated into two comparable groups: group I received health education through designed PE program and group II did not receive PE program. Disease activity and disability were assessed at the start of study and at two visits later, that is, after 3 months and 6 months, by using the

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28 joint disease activity score 28 and the Health Assessment Questionnaire disability index.

Results

On comparing laboratory investigation and outcome scores at follow-up visits, although there were no significant differences between the two study groups regarding laboratory investigation, disease activity score 28 and Health Assessment Questionnaire scores at the start of the study, comparative differences were reported in the follow-up visits. Significant decreases in the laboratory values and scores were reported in group I, whereas no difference was reported in group II.

Conclusion

Patient education interventions in patients with rheumatoid arthritis documented significant improvements in behavior, pain, and disability among these patients.

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