

# High Prevalence of Depression and Anxiety in Patients with RMD's



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## Introduction:

- Depression and anxiety have a higher prevalence in patients with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMD's) compared to the general population. <sup>1</sup>
- The concomitant presence of these morbidities with RMD's can reduce engagement with services and limit rehabilitation participation. <sup>2</sup>
- It is therefore important health professionals treating individuals with RMD's can identify depression and anxiety.
- Such treatments require psychologists' input, which is currently lacking at the RMDU.
- We conducted a prospective study to measure the prevalence of depression and anxiety in patients admitted to the RMDU with RMD's.

## Aim:

- To assess the prevalence and burden of depression and anxiety on patients attending the RMDU for rehabilitation.
- This was performed using the HADS (Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale) questionnaire.

## Method:

- A prospective study involving 34 patients was performed over a 5-week period.
- The HADS questionnaire is a 7-question anxiety subscale combined with 7-question depression subscale patients use to self-report. <sup>3</sup>
- It is a validated measure of anxiety and depression, and reports these morbidities in each individual as 'Not Present', 'Equivocal' and 'Present'.
- The questionnaires were distributed to patients during their two or three-week rehabilitation programmes and their charts reviewed.
- Scores were recorded (Image 1) along with patient demographics (Image 2). These were then compared to values previously reported in population studies. <sup>1,4</sup>

## Results:

- The mean age of the 34 patients was 57.0 ± SD. 23
- 68% were female
- The primary RMD was as follows: Inflammatory Arthritis 21 (61%), Fibromyalgia 8 (24%), Miscellaneous 5 (15%)

- The presence of both depression and anxiety was observed to be significantly higher in this cohort of patients with RMD's compared to what would be expected in the general population (Image 1).
- Significant numbers of patients were categorised as 'Equivocal', suggesting the true prevalence of these morbidities is likely underrepresented.

N=34	HADS- Depression	HADS-Anxiety
Not Present	13(38%)	12(35%)
Equivocal	10(29%)	7(21%)
Present	11(32%)	15(44%)
Expected Prevalence	20-25%	20-30%
Average score	8.65	10.03
Concomitant equivocal or present morbidities	16(47%)	

Table 1: HADS Questionnaire results

Age range	17-86
Mean	57
Median	58
Sex:	
Female	23 (68%)
Male	11 (32%)
Primary Diagnosis:	
Rheumatoid Arthritis	11(32%)
Fibromyalgia	8(24%)
Undetermined Inflammatory arthritis	5(14%)
Remainder: JIA, SLE, PsA, AS, MCTD, PAN, OA	10(29%)

Table 2: Patient Demographics

## Conclusion:

- This study revealed patients attending the RMDU were substantially more likely to suffer depression and anxiety than is expected in the general population.
- This data supports the need for the input of dedicated psychologists in the care for patients with RMD's.